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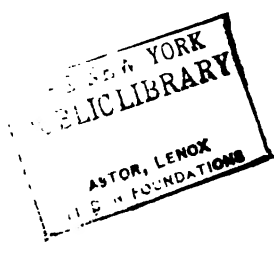
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THE DECLINE OF
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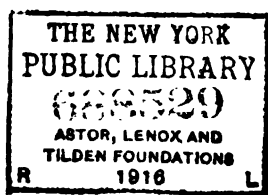
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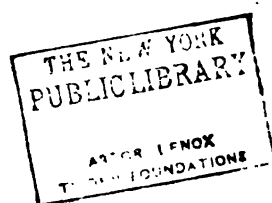
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M. J. G. 1788

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DECLINE OF THE MONARCHY.

CHAPTER I.

THE PHILOSOPHERS. (CONTINUED.)

VOLTAIRE AND THE ENCYCLOPEDISTS. Voltaire at Berlin and Ferney. *Candide*. Developments of the Philosophy of the Eighteenth Century. Metaphysics of Condillac. Ethics of Helvetius. Progress of the Sciences. D'Alembert. Natural Sciences. **BUFFON. NATURAL HISTORY.** *History and Theory of the Earth. Epochs of Nature. History of Animals.* **NATURALISM. DIDEROT.** His First Writings. His Association with D'Alembert. Universality of Diderot. *The Encyclopædia. The Preliminary Discourse. Æsthetics of Diderot. MATERIALISM.*

1748-1774.

It is time to return to the history of ideas, which, during almost all this century, unfolds side by side with the history of events, the one increasing in importance in proportion as the other diminishes. On passing from political intrigues and material strife to intellectual strife, from the generals and favorites of Louis XV. to the writers and the philosophers, we seem passing from pygmies to Titans. Here even the errors are excesses of energy and daring: they attest the vigor of the minds led astray by their very vitality.

During the first period of the eighteenth century, a single man has almost unceasingly occupied the stage,—a kind of Briareus of philosophy, aiming at every thing, meditating on every thing, striking everywhere, as if he had a hundred heads and hands. This will not be the case henceforth. Voltaire will lose nothing of his activity or his genius; he will even grow in authority among the nations; but his authority will no longer be unique and undisputed in the army of innovators: his boldness will be surpassed both in good and evil, and new heroes will rush unshielded, with more passionate impetuosity, into that arena, constantly fuller and more tumultuous, where Montesquieu, hitherto his sole

rival, has appeared only at rare intervals with measured steps and well covered with defensive armor.

The career of Voltaire was clearly divided into two parts by his departure for Berlin in 1750. We need not recount this sojourn in Prussia, which he has traced himself with his inimitable pen; and we shall not undertake to sketch the history of that wholly French Academy of Berlin, which exercised such notable influence over the spirit of Northern Germany: this subject has been treated in a recent work with all the elaborateness desirable.¹ The important point to be noted here is, that it was there that Atheism exhibited itself systematically and unveiled before daring to do so in France, and there also that Voltaire, who had as yet opposed, more or less openly, only positive religion and Cartesian spiritualism, had a first conflict with Atheism, and played the part of defender, after having always been the assailant; thus marking the fixed point where he would have gladly arrested the progress of destruction. In his cynical works, *La Mettrie*, Frederick's physician, combining the mechanical physics of Descartes, separated from his metaphysics, with sensualism, denied all morality, all conscience, and all distinction between good and evil, and made the world an eternal aggregate of movements without a motive power, and man a sensitive machine. Voltaire replied by the poem, *The Natural Law*, an eloquent manifesto of Deism and of Universal Morality.² Frederick, the judge of the field, left full liberty to the combatants; and all opinions, Catholicism excepted, had a place in his academy. Protestant Christianity was gloriously represented therein by the philosopher geometer, Euler, whom France can claim to a certain degree, since he wrote part of his works in French, like Leibnitz, especially his *Letters to a German Princess*. The master's taste, nevertheless, caused the sceptical and mocking philosophy to predominate, which was not displeasing to the most illustrious of his guests.

Voltaire passed a few months of real enchantment in this society sparkling with wit and sarcastic gayety. Divided between labor and pleasure, — the pleasure of the mind, which had always been the first, and which was now the only one to him, — he had never so fully lived. Far from forgetting the mother-country in this little philosophic France, whose royalty he shared with Fred-

¹ *Histoire de l'Académie des sciences de Berlin*, by M. Bartholmess, crowned by the French Academy.

² Written in 1751, published in 1756, and condemned by the parliament, although the Christian dogmas were not attacked in it: the Jansenist sect was, however.



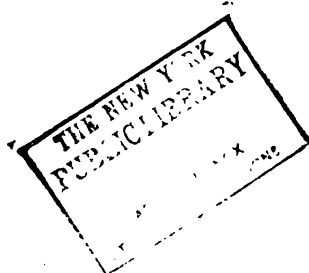
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EULER.

*From a Picture by J. L. Verelsteden
in the Collection of the Académie de France*

Under the superintendence of the Society for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge

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erick, he became more patriotic at a distance, and finished his national work, *The Age of Louis XIV.*, at the same time with *The Essay on the Manners of Nations*. Fire flashed in a continuous jet from his pen as from his lips.

The prestige was of short duration. It is the heart, and not the mind, that makes lasting bonds. The charm that Frederick knew how to give to his intercourse could not long conceal the coldness of his soul: could he have exhausted in one evening the wit of his friends, he would have thrown them away the next day like a squeezed orange, — an incomprehensible man, born to inspire astonishment, and not affection; admirable in conversation and familiar correspondence; mediocre with the pen in hand, when the German monarch, become a French author, struggled with the difficulties of a foreign language;¹ compelling the respect of Europe by his martial prodigies and his administrative wisdom; and rendering himself the laughing-stock of courts by the eccentricities of bad poetry, and by an ignoble and revolting vice.

The tyrannical selfishness of Frederick, the susceptibility and irascibility of Voltaire, and the jealous intrigues of Maupertuis, the President of the Academy, who was overshadowed by the proximity of this powerful name, soon brought about coolness, unfriendly behavior, and dissensions, followed by hollow reconciliations. The scandalous rupture in which this so much vaunted friendship ended — the presage of the destined issue of all alliances between absolutism and philosophy — is familiar to all (1753). Every one knows the story of Voltaire's captivity at Frankfort, in the hands of the recruiting agents of the King of Prussia, — *Alexander* transformed into *Dionysius of Syracuse*. Frederick was ashamed of it, however. He employed grace and address in repairing his errors; and the philosopher and the king became reconciled afterwards, but at a distance: they could not refrain from liking each other; but Voltaire pardoned only by halves, as was proved by his terrible secret Memoirs.

Escaped from the Prussian claws, Voltaire was unwilling to return to Paris, where the antipathy, or rather the fear, of the King, permitted him no security. He wandered about for some time in Lorraine and Alsace. Harassed by the clergy, he repaired to Geneva by the way of Lyons: the popular ovation which he received in the latter city manifested to him the progress that his

¹ His political and military Memoirs, our principal authority with respect to the wars of these times, are infinitely superior to his purely literary works; but he is far in these from Cæsar and Napoleon.

name and ideas had made in France. He chose the place of his final settlement with great adroitness. He purchased two houses near Geneva and Lausanne; then a third in the territory of Gex, the château of Ferney, which became his habitual residence some years after, when political disturbances had disgusted him with the city of Calvin. He thus had a footing at once in France, in Berne, and in Geneva; and secured himself time, in case of a storm, to shelter his person from danger, and, in ordinary times, facilities for supervising the publication of his works, whether acknowledged or anonymous, to which the interest of commerce, as well as the taste for letters, guaranteed the tolerance of the Genevese magistrates. Descartes had formerly sought an obscure retreat in order to think: Voltaire made himself a brilliant solitude in order to act. Les Délices and Ferney were to him a little kingdom, so to speak. All Europe viewed him from afar, seated, like the God of tempests, between the Alps and the Jura; and philosophy had its place of pilgrimage, whither the adepts of the new ideas were to journey, for twenty years and more, to salute their patriarch, and whither even crowned heads were to throng.

Voltaire had worthily inaugurated his accession by his beautiful *Epistle to Liberty* (1755): the Alps and the heroic traditions of the republican Helvetia had well inspired him: nevertheless, this period was the most painful of his moral life. The disenchantment with respect to Frederick had left his soul filled with bitterness: the scourges which, at that very moment, Nature and kings were vying with each other in letting loose on humanity, disordered his imagination, and saddened his heart. An earthquake which shook the West from Sahara to the North Sea had just destroyed the principal towns of Morocco, and overthrown Lisbon upon thousands of corpses (November, 1755); and the Seven-years' War was begun by the gigantic piracies of those Englishmen whom Voltaire had celebrated as a nation of sages, and continued by the mad French invasion which Madame de Pompadour precipitated upon Germany. Surrounded with so many misfortunes, crimes, and follies, the disciple of Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke lost his belief in that theory of optimism which had long been the connecting link of his thoughts, and to which the course of life had already dealt so many blows. Thence proceeded the poem on the *Disaster of Lisbon*, and the novel *Candide*, the same thought expressed under two such opposite forms: here a hymn of suffering, abrupt, heart-rending, pathetic to sublimity, rising to God as the plaint of unhappy humanity; there

a long and acrid satire, in which the *all is good* of optimism becomes the text for inexhaustible raillery of facts ; a bitter laughter, a sardonic gayety, which gnaws the heart like a serpent's tooth. *Candide* is, of all the works of Voltaire, the one that has been the worst judged : it has been ascribed to him as a crime equal to the unpardonable sin of the *Maid of Orleans*. There has been seen in it a cruel sport, an impious derision of the human race, the work of a satanic genius. The moral state of the writer at the epoch when the work was conceived has been wholly disregarded. This book is assuredly very painful to read ; but the reader suffers only because the author has suffered. His soul, so mobile, and so well armed by its mobility against suffering, never perhaps experienced such anxieties as at the moment when it thus burst forth into convulsive laughter.

Candide is, to speak truly, a renunciation of all system. Voltaire abandons all explanation of man and the universe, and remains clinging in empty space to a vague and obscure Deism, without final causes, without enthusiasm, and without consolation.

He no longer had a system : others were about to make a system after him, beyond him, in spite of him ; they were about to deduce fatalism and pure materialism from his inconsistent sensualism, and Atheism or universal scepticism from his Deism devoid of basis and authority. Thinkers more eloquent and more authoritative, hearts more upright, than La Mettrie, were about to follow to the end the old path of Epicures and Lucretius, the highway to annihilation.

They did not straightway proceed thither. The progress was varied, complicated, and embarrassed with singular contradictions. We must thread this labyrinth, each winding of which offers a lesson and points out a quicksand to posterity. At the very beginning appeared the most brilliant of the contradictions that we denounce. A new system of metaphysics was formulated for the use of the sensualists and the fatalists by a philosopher who was neither the one nor the other, and who, spiritualistic and almost idealistic, lent to materialism, without desiring it, its most formidable weapon.

Voltaire had introduced Locke into France, and imbued all his works with the principles of Locke ; but he had added nothing to these principles, and had not published his own *Treatise on Metaphysics*, which, moreover, has neither the method nor the rigor of a system. It is a characteristic fact, that the man who gave to the eighteenth century its metaphysical formula, however eminent

may have been his merit, too much depreciated in our days, was not one of the great geniuses of the epoch, one of those brilliant names which will live forever in the memory of multitudes. The reason was that the eighteenth century was a polemical and political, much more than a metaphysical age: its glory was in polemics and politics, and not in metaphysics.

The Abbé de Condillac,¹ a man of lucid mind, and a correct and pure writer, less practical, and mingling less with active life, but more of a dialectician, and especially more of a geometrician, than Locke, seemed destined, by the nature of his intellect, to attach himself to Cartesianism rather than to the doctrine imported from England. In the first chapter of his first work, the *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge* (1746), he began, in fact, by refuting the doubt of Locke, repeated to satiety by Voltaire, "Can the body think?" and demonstrated in a solid and luminous manner the unity, simplicity, and indivisibility of the soul or the thinking subject. He went farther, and seemed to draw the induction, not only that the soul exists, but that it is the only certain existence. "Whether we mount to the skies or descend to the lowest depths, we do not go out of ourselves, and we never perceive any thing but our own thought." "The modifications of the soul," he says elsewhere, "become the qualities of every thing that exists outside of it."

What was to be expected from this starting-point if not a development, or, at most, a reformation of rationalism, an effort to revive the French metaphysical school? If danger existed, there was reason to believe that it was on the side of idealistic scepticism, of that theory which refuses certainty to the external world, insufficiently demonstrated by pure reason.

Strange infirmity of the human mind! This same philosopher was about to carry the system of sensation farther than Locke; to construct it, at least in appearance, with a rigor which the latter had not possessed; and to sweep from this system all that still opposed obstacles to materialism.

To discard from metaphysics hypotheses and rash aspirations; to know how to confine one's self to the limits which nature has fixed for the human mind, — such was the end proposed by Condillac. "The first object," he says, "should be the study of the human mind, not to discover its inexplicable nature, but to know its operations. It is necessary to go back to the origin of our

¹ Born at Grenoble in 1715.

ideas, to develop their generation, and to follow them to the bounds prescribed by nature, in order to fix the extent of our knowledge, and to regenerate the human understanding by limiting it to its true objects."

From the first step, it is objected, are we not already beyond observation and analysis, which would begin, on their side, by verifying the nature of our ideas before seeking their origin in the cradle of our obscure infancy? To go back by an *à priori* to this origin, which cannot be directly observed,—is not this precisely beginning by an hypothesis?

"My design," he continues, "is to refer to a single principle all that concerns the human understanding." Here, there is no doubt, we are really in the domain of the *à priori* and the hypothesis!

This principle is that all our ideas, and all our knowledge, come from the senses; that perception or sensation is the first operation of the soul, and the one which, by transforming itself, successively becomes all the others. Consciousness, attention, and reminiscence are only the three degrees of transformed sensation, which then experience new transformations. Locke is thus exceeded. He had reserved, by the side of the passive principle of sensation, the active principle of reflection: here sensation is every thing. Condillac, notwithstanding, believed that the soul possessed an activity of its own. A very explicit passage may be quoted from him concerning the power and the active character of reflection, a passage which appears irreconcilable with the formulas of his system: the reason of this is, that, to arrive at his single principle, he had confounded the active and the passive, sensation and reflection, and believed sensation itself active. But his disciples would not stop at this confusion of terms, but would carry the theory to its logical consequences, following common sense as to the passivity of sensation.

It was not worth while to write a treatise *On Systems* against systems (1749), and to attack so warmly, in the name of observation and experiment, the abstract principles and hypotheses of Plato or Descartes, of Malebranche or Leibnitz, only to end one's self in a system much less specious than those which were attacked. Descartes, at least, had established his first principle, and made hypotheses only in setting out from what was above hypothesis.

The theory of Condillac was completed in the *Treatise on Sen-*

sations (1754).¹ We shall not follow him through his famous metaphysical novel, *The Animated Statue*. A fatalistic and materialistic philosopher would not have arranged his plan differently: not only the innate ideas, but the essential faculties, of the mind appear to be denied here: the mind is nothing but a blank tablet; the soul is absolutely void until sensation comes to write on this tablet. This *statue*, this inert matter which he takes for a subject, and which does not offer the least relation to the real being, to the infant man, a nature active in its essence and from its origin, he awakens to life, we know not how, by a first sensation, the principle not only of all the ideas, but of the faculties themselves, which are nothing but acquired habits, and not preëxisting tendencies. The desire and the will are, like the ideas and the faculties, nothing but transformed sensations. Our ideas are all relative to our manner of feeling, and representatives of the objects of our sensations: there are, therefore, no absolute and general ideas. The *Ego* of the *Statue*, its personality, is only the collection of the sensations which it experiences, and those of which it is reminded by memory. The moral ideas themselves are not independent of the senses: the morality of actions consists only in their conformity with laws. Now, these actions are visible, and the laws likewise, since the laws are agreements made by men, — agreements, it is true, which should not be arbitrary, but dictated by nature according to our necessities and faculties. All this is very unmetaphysical, if metaphysics is the science of principles and causes: laws are differently defined by Montesquieu!

We are not ignorant that Condillac always implies the being one and simple, the substance under the phenomena; but, after him, this reservation would be abolished; and besides, this being, if it existed, would exist without liberty. It was in vain that Condillac struggled against this consequence; it was in vain that he wrote a treatise on *Free Will*, and sought to prove the existence of God: sensation can give neither God nor liberty; it can arrive neither at the principle of causality nor at general ideas.

The French mind must have been absorbed by a strange preoccupation for such a system to have reigned almost undisputed over metaphysics for more than half a century.² It must have

¹ This treatise was prepared with the assistance of a woman, Mademoiselle Ferrand, who died before the publication of the common work.

² Until La Romiguère, who, while defending Condillac against the imputation of ma-

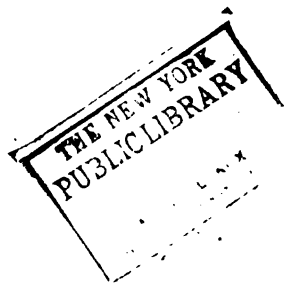




CHARLES BONNET
(Botaniste, Zoologiste et Philosophe),
Membre Correspondant de l'Académie des Sciences
de Paris

Né à Genève le 13 Mars 1720.

Mort le 20 Mai 1792.



wandered far from the way of abstract truth, and been fully engrossed by the struggle with realities. During another and the last half century, the doctrine of sensation, expelled from philosophy, but taking refuge in the sciences, has left only too many traces in the ideas and habits of the present generation.

Whatever may have been the errors of Condillac, and their fatal consequences, he will keep his place in the sacred chair of philosophy. He had the merit of putting an end to a confusion between the faculties and the ideas which had misled his most illustrious predecessors. He sought to analyze the faculties of the soul, and to discern their connection and order; and, although he was unsuccessful, credit should be given him for the example and effort. He rendered a still greater service. On disengaging his real thought from his erroneous formulas, it will be recognized that no one since Descartes has lent a more effective support to the doctrine of the unity of the human being. Descartes had said that the whole peculiarity of the soul is only that of thinking. Unless a forced interpretation is given to the word "thought," this excessive and incomplete definition leaves a certain advantage, either to the materialistic critic or to the old scholastic opinions concerning the two souls, — the reasoning and the *sensitive*. Condillac, in defining the soul as a substance that feels, a substance capable of sensation, completed Descartes.¹ He explicitly asserted what Descartes believed at heart, that the soul alone feels by reason of the organs; that every thing is in the soul; and openly applied this principle to all the animated beings that Descartes had banished to the mechanical world. *I feel, therefore I am, therefore I have a soul* (or rather *I am a soul*), is not less true than *I think, therefore I am*: only it cannot be made the basis of a method, since to philosophize it is not enough to be a passivity that

terialism, overthrew his theory by substituting for sensation the active and voluntary principle of attention as the starting-point of a whole system of the faculties and operations of the soul. With him commenced the revival of metaphysics in France. It has been too often forgotten that La Romiguère preceded Royer Collard, and that the philosophic renaissance dates in France from 1811, and not from the Restoration. There were in the eighteenth century intermediate links between Condillac and La Romiguère. For instance, Euler, in the metaphysical considerations contained in the *Lettres à une princesse d'Allemagne*, very correctly separates attention from sensation; but he becomes troubled after the first step, and does not arrive at a true system of the faculties of the soul. The naturalistic philosopher of Geneva, Charles Bonnet, in his *Essai analytique sur les facultés de l'âme* (1760), again falls behind Euler, and nearer Condillac.

¹ And Leibnitz. Descartes says the soul is a thought; Leibnitz says the soul is a force, an activity; Condillac says the soul is a *sensibility*.

feels ; it is necessary to be an activity that thinks. It is here that Condillac was fundamentally mistaken.¹

Condillac, a man of grave manners and circumspect mind, did not go perhaps, on his own part, so far as Deism, or put himself in hostility with the religion whose livery he wore. He was very far from admitting the moral consequences that might logically be deduced from sensualistic metaphysics ; and his own conclusions, as we have just seen, were thus deduced only through misunderstanding. Another was to draw these consequences without reservation and without scruple.

This other was Helvetius,² a wit and a man of pleasure, of an excellent natural disposition, but much better fitted to play the part in the world of a rich philanthropist — partly a man of letters, and partly a Mæcenas — than to launch into the lofty speculations of abstract thought.

A farmer-general, he had presented the wholly new spectacle of a defender of the poor in those functions which usually showed to the taxpayers nothing but tyrants. Having retired from business with a large fortune, of which he made the most honorable use, he undertook a theoretical work, in which he summed up and set forth unmasked the opinions that were current around him in society.

The Mind appeared in 1758. The title is imperfectly justified.

¹ We must not quit Condillac without calling to mind two works full of profound and bold views, *La Grammaire* and *La Langue des Calculs*, which would have sufficed to render his memory illustrious. An effort has been made to attribute to his theory concerning the formation of languages and the necessity of signs a materialistic character which it does not possess. He clearly saw, like Rousseau, that signs and sounds are by no means arbitrary ; that the first were natural, and that those which came afterwards were invented according to analogy. He perceived, that, as wants precede knowledge, knowledge precedes words ; since we make words simply to express ideas which we already possess : only, the words, the *artificial* (not *arbitrary*) signs, are necessary to furnish us the means of analyzing the thoughts which present themselves simultaneously in our mind, to decompose the operations of the soul, and to give us distinct ideas of these operations, as well as of external objects.

In short, his theory is that man *thinks*, but does not *reason*, without the aid of language ; that simple ideas, which we have in common with the animals, precede language ; that general ideas, to which the animals cannot attain for want of the faculty which discovers signs, are manifested only by the aid of language.

We will not discuss, but must mention, his famous axiom, that all science is only a succession of identical propositions ; *that we go from the same to the same* ; that a science of reasoning consists, not in a progress of ideas, but in a progress of expressions ; that is, that every thing is contained in the first idea, which it is only in question to develop. His extensive *Cours d'Études*, composed for the education of the heir of Parma, presents everywhere at once precepts and examples of the analytical method in which he excels.

² Born in 1715, and the son of the celebrated physician of that name.

The analysis of the human mind is only the introduction, and not the subject of the work. The end of Helvetius is to determine what is the motive power of human actions and judgments; in other terms, what is the principle of morality. He begins by repeating Condillac, while carrying him to extremes. He advances the theory that the cause of our superiority over animals is found in the difference of our physical organization, and especially in the shape of our hands. Condillac could not have disavowed this; for he had said, that, if animals have not the same faculties as ourselves, it is because the organ of touch is less perfect among them: but what Condillac would never have granted, and what nevertheless is logically deduced from the system of sensation, is, that moral liberty is a chimera. "Our wishes," says Helvetius, "being the immediate effects or the necessary results of the impressions that we have received, a philosophical treatise on liberty would be only a treatise on effects without a cause."

It is needless to say that Helvetius supports Locke and Voltaire in opposition to Condillac, on the question, *Can the body think?* He goes farther. The word matter no longer signifies only the collection of properties common to all bodies; that is, apparently, matter, as well as mind, are merely words; there is no substance; there are only qualities without an object. The property of feeling is, in his opinion, common to all bodies, even inorganic.

From this metaphysics he hastens to pass to ethics.

Man, being only a *sensible* being (he means *sensitive*), can naturally have but one end,—the pleasure of the senses. Every thing ends in this, directly or indirectly. Goodness is that which contributes to our pleasures; evil, that which is injurious to our interests. Interest is the true measure of our judgments, and the principle of our actions. Probity is the habit of doing deeds useful to society. Virtue is what is in conformity with the public interest; vice, what is contrary to it. Actions are indifferent in themselves; that is to say, there is neither vice nor virtue in reference to ourselves,—to our *inner being*; neither vice nor virtue in itself. Those kinds of virtues relative to ourselves are virtues of prejudice (modesty, for instance). What is vice in a religious point of view is unimportant to the public good. The vicious man is to be pitied for having those tastes and passions which *force* him to seek his happiness in the misfortunes of others; for, in fine, men always obey their interest: the moral universe is subjected to the laws of interest, as the physical universe to

the laws of motion. It is as impossible to love goodness for itself as to love evil for itself.

The humane man is he to whom the sight of the unhappiness of others is insupportable, and who, to save himself from this spectacle, is, as it were, *forced* to succor the unfortunate. The inhuman man is he to whom the sight of the misery of others is a pleasant spectacle. The highest virtue, as the most shameful vice, in us, is the effect of the more or less lively pleasure that we feel in abandoning ourselves to it. Nature is nothing but habit. Almost the only two motive powers of communities are hunger among savages, and (physical) love among civilized men. A multitude of peoples live or have lived in society without the idea of God.¹

How, then, succeed in improving society? By teaching individuals to find their advantage in the public happiness. Education is every thing. The mind being a *blank tablet* in the infant man, intellects are naturally equal. The difference of education alone makes their inequality. Chance alone develops genius in certain men.

We see by what a concatenation of ideas Helvetius arrives, in the moral order, at the point of dispensing with God; in the political order, at that of tacitly deducing an equality which is not the equality of rights (there are no longer either rights or duties here), but a pretended identity of fact among men. He arrives at a materialistic democracy by the same road which led Hobbes, more logical and more profound, to an Atheistic despotism. Hobbes rightly saw that absolute power is alone capable of maintaining any material order whatsoever in a community without an ideal and without law. The lion is needed to command the wolves.

It is important to point out here the first germ of the false democracy which was to be, for a time that we cannot yet measure, the chief obstacle to the institution of the new city. Geniuses far superior to Helvetius were to err with him in this path. We shall revert to it hereafter. As to his theory of selfishness or interest, we will content ourselves with a few words in passing. It is quite certain that man can set out only from himself, and that there is always some relation to himself in his sentiments; it would be puerile to discuss this point: but, if we call selfishness or interest every sentiment which interests us in any manner whatever, we do violence to language; if we pretend that every

¹ He knew history as well as human nature, which is saying every thing.

sentiment which interests us has only ourselves for its end, we do violence to common sense. Selfishness, in the language of the whole world, is that which shuts us up within ourselves, which considers others only as the material for our enjoyment: all that causes us to love outside of ourselves; all that leads us towards others or towards general ideas, which are all summed up mediately or immediately in God; all affection directed towards other beings or towards the Creator; all individual, collective, or divine love,—is the opposite of selfishness; and to deny the reality of these affections,—to deny, for instance, that goodness can be loved for its own sake,—is to be profoundly ignorant of human nature, and of the nature of existence in general.

The distinctive characteristic of Helvetius is that audacity of vulgar logic which reveals, not the extent, but, on the contrary, the bounds, of a limited and perverted mind: the complex and mysterious relations of things escape him; he denies what he does not see, and is never restrained by common sense, which he takes for prejudice.¹

This mediocre book had an effect which greatly exceeded its proper value: must we think that contemporary society, which had sat for the portrait before the author, recognized its own image? "This man has told everybody's secret." This terrible saying of a female wit,² which condemned a whole generation, was true only with great restrictions. A furious tempest broke forth in official regions. The book had appeared, under the author's name, with the license of the King, a complaisant censor having approved without attempting to comprehend it. The Sorbonne and the Archbishop of Paris thundered against it: the Court despoiled Helvetius of an honorary post which he held in the Queen's household, and the parliament was about to issue a writ against him. He retracted in the most explicit, and, it must be admitted, the least worthy terms. His doctrine was not of those which make martyrs. No one took this retraction in earnest, and it was not calculated to arrest the movement of ideas to which Helvetius had served as an organ. Too many men were glad, without being willing to admit it, to see their practice reduced to theory.

How far could this theory lead? Helvetius, had he fully comprehended it, would have been even more appalled than Condillac

¹ See a good analysis of Helvetius in the *Cours d'histoire de la Philosophie moderne*, by M. Cousin, first series, t. III. l. iv. v.

² Madame de Boufflers.

must have been at seeing what Helvetius had made of the system of sensation. All vices and all crimes were tacitly justified. Helvetius, who was good by nature, did and counselled goodness because he found pleasure in doing so: a monster of madness, who had destroyed in himself all instinctive sympathies, would only have to apply the same principle in an inverse direction, to draw the ideal of crime from a book which seems written by Tiberius at Caprea, and to annihilate, after virtue, Nature herself. Nature, in fact, is only a word, like all else, according to *The Mind*.

It suffices to indicate these extremes of monstrous logic: it is unnecessary to dwell on sinister exceptions. The wholesale evil which attacked this society of lax and effeminate manners was not the energy of crime, the over-excitement of the senses turned to orgie-like and bloody delirium, as in the era of the Cæsars, but the sophistication of minds, the benumbing of hearts, the degradation of souls by the destruction of all ideal. Helvetius reduced to maxims, so to speak, the decline predicted by Leibnitz.¹

Ideality having disappeared from the moral sciences, was all fire then extinct? Had all that warms the heart, all that elevates the mind, vanished? Was this age, so full, after all, of buoyancy and life, about to sink and stagnate, asphyxiated in the mire? It was impossible. The restless ardor of imaginations and intellects knew well how to create for themselves an aliment: the passion, indestructible at the bottom of the soul of France, might indeed have been repressed, but not stifled, by petty vices and petty sophisms. No: sensual selfishness was not yet *everybody's secret*. Enthusiasm, driven from the domain of the heart, from the world of minds, took refuge at first in the sciences of Nature,—in the great spectacle of that external world which was unveiling itself more and more to our gaze. We have seen with what sincere zeal and with what energy Voltaire had sung, commented on, and popularized Newton, and instigated the truly sublime verification of one of the Newtonian theories by our courageous French travellers: but Voltaire was in physics merely a brilliant popularizer; he was not the initiative genius which the philosophy of Nature was awaiting among us. He skimmed the surface of it with brilliancy, like every thing else; but he did nothing more than skim it: he was too truly the successor of that French literature so fully absorbed in the analysis of man, he was too much the representative of the social spirit, the type itself of re-

¹ See vol. I. p. 318.

finer civilization, to be the man of Nature. The sentiment of the mysterious harmonies of the universe, and of what may be called the religion of life, was lacking in his rational Deism: he never knew the patience and contemplation necessary to surprise the secrets of the eternal Isis.

Voltaire contributed to diffuse science without increasing it. The French scholars of the first half of the century caused the advancement of the different branches of human knowledge: but none of them had that synthetic view which embraces and regenerates a great science as a whole; none had the stamp of creative geniuses. We have already named a few of the eminent men who sustained the honor of the Academy of Sciences, the Mairans,¹ the Clairauts, the Fontaines, etc. Scientific France kept the high position that she had conquered. It was perhaps in mathematics that her preponderance was still decided. A man of superior mind had been revealed therein, — D'Alembert, destined later to an active though circumspect part in a sphere less peaceful than geometry. The natural son of the renowned Canoness Tencin; abandoned by his mother's orders on the steps of the Church Saint-Jean-le-Rond, and picked up and reared by a poor female glazier, whom he always acknowledged as his true mother, when, later, Madame du Tencin wished in vain to claim a son who had become illustrious, — he emerged at a very early age from obscurity by precocious talent employed by an independent character and an able mind. In 1743, at twenty-six, his treatise on *Dynamics* placed him at the summit of contemporaneous science: his principle of the *Equality of the Changes experienced by the Motion of Bodies, and the Forces employed to produce these Changes*, caused a true revolution in geometry applied to mechanics.² In 1746, he invented a new calculus, the *Integral Calculus of Partial Differences*, a powerful instrument of ulterior progress. In 1749, he resolved the problem of the *precession of the equinoxes*; then published *Researches on Different Important Points of the System of the World*. He attained the highest rank among the few men that have known how to wed literary elegance to sci-

¹ We are indebted to him, apart from his discoveries in the exact sciences, for having been the first to make known among us the true printed and written characters of the Chinese language, and for having paved the way, in more than one respect, for the great modern discoveries concerning Egyptian ideography. He was the popularizer in Europe of the works of Father Parennin, that Jesuit who played so important and so original a part in China, where he had been kept as a mathematician, after the persecution of 1722.

² Meanwhile, Vaucanson's ingenious inventions in practical mechanics familiarized the public with the progress of sciences.

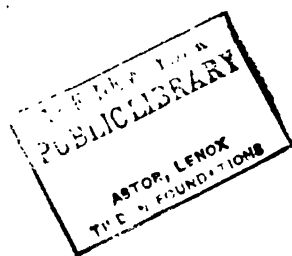
entific solidity ; but this clear, firm, and methodical mind, which had only light without heat, and reason without imagination, was unsuited to the sciences of life, like Voltaire, but through other causes.

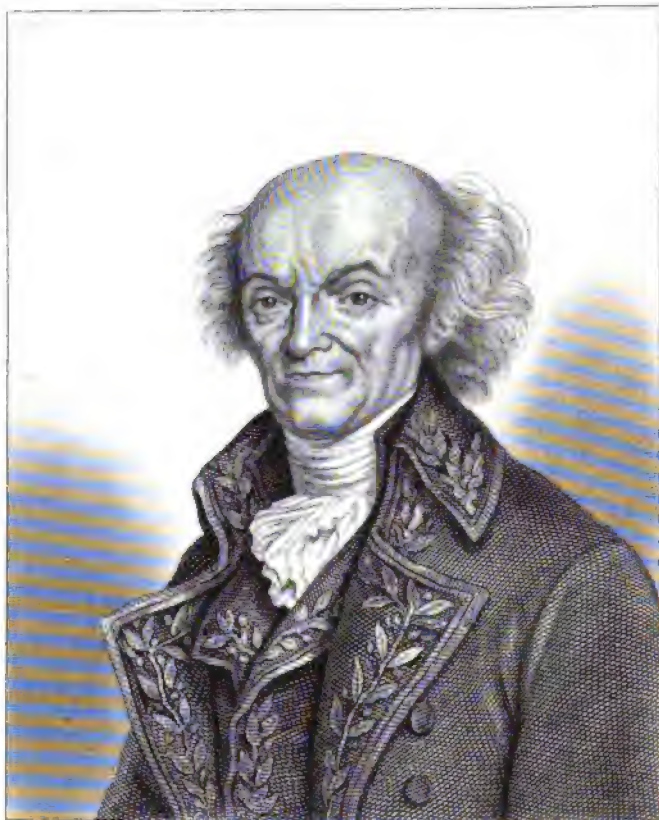
D'Alembert shone in mathematics applied to the theory of the physical sciences, astronomy, mechanics, and general physics. The practical mathematics, at least geography and geodesy, alike preserved their superiority in France. Danville, the continuer of Delisle, reconstructed ancient geography, and rendered inappreciable services to history. Jacques Cassini erected a perpendicular to the meridian, begun by his father, and finished by him : France was thus measured from Collioure to Dunkirk, and from St. Malo to Strasburg. The third Cassini (César-François) corrected the works of his father and grandfather, and undertook, with Camus and Montigni, a great map of France in 1751.¹

In astronomical observations, foreigners rivalled France : there was a noble emulation. The scientific voyages were continued. Twice, in 1761 and 1769, at first among the perils of war, then after the peace of Paris, the French astronomers journeyed to the remotest parts of the world, to the seas of India and China, to Siberia and to California, to observe the two successive transits of Venus across the sun's disk. The distance of the sun from the earth was thenceforth known within three hundred thousand leagues,—that is, within about one-hundredth ; while before there had been an uncertainty of from eight to ten million leagues. The names of La Gentil, the Canon of St. Genevieve, Pingré, and the Abbé Chappe, deserve a place by the side of those of the Bouguers, La Condamines, and Clairauts. The Abbé Chappe died a martyr to science in those very regions where so many bold adventurers were one day to wrest gold from the bowels of the earth at the price of less noble sufferings.² Another learned traveller, the Abbé de La Caille, gave the easiest method of calculating longitude at sea from the observation of the moon (1755). The *Nautical Almanac* was commenced according to his plan, but was not

¹ The first organization of civil engineering dates from this epoch. Cassini formed a corps of engineers to execute his map. He died in 1784 ; and the work was finished in 1790 by his son, Jacques Dominique. There have been few examples of such hereditary transmission of special talents.

² To the same period belongs another celebrated voyage, the first voyage around the world made by a French vessel,—that of Bougainville (1764-1766). The English and the Dutch had already made fifteen of these expeditions. The discovery of Tahiti, and the observations on the manners and customs of its inhabitants, at an epoch when men were so much preoccupied with the *state of nature* and every thing relating to it, gave the narrative of Bougainville great popularity.





Ancien tableau

*Lacaille, Joseph-François Français de
Astronome + 1767.*

Gravé par L. Massard

finished; and the English robbed us of the honor of its completion (1767). Lalande, the pupil of La Caille, organized astronomy, so to speak, by grouping the adepts of this beautiful science: he wrote his great *Treatise on Astronomy* (1764), and took for fifteen years the principal part in the publication of the *Knowledge of the Times* (1760-1775). Messier published, in 1771, the catalogue of the *Nebulae*.

History also owes remembrance to the skilful artists who improved the instruments of science, new organs which centuple the power of the organs given us by Nature: as, for instance, Lepaute, who caused clockmaking to make such great progress, while his wife, the assistant of Clairaut and Lalande, participated in the progress of astronomy; and Leroi and Bertaud, the inventors of the chronometers experimented upon under all latitudes by Father Pingré.

In some other branches of human knowledge, France did not make so important a figure. Chemistry, that new science which was freeing itself more and more from the old alchemic visions, presented labors worthy of esteem among us; but the essential discoveries concerning the gases and the true elements of bodies belonged to foreign countries. The theory of chemistry, nevertheless, still remained to be constructed, and France was ere long to take a glorious revenge. From the learned lectures given by Rouelle¹ at the Jardin des Plantes, was about to proceed that Lavoisier, destined to systematize the science which introduces man into the mysterious laboratory of Nature, and reveals to him no longer only the properties, but the composition and decomposition, of inorganic bodies.

Neither was it to France that the glory reverted of the brilliant discoveries wrought in the most obscure, and hitherto most intangible part of physics, — electricity. Yet, before Franklin, a Frenchman, Duhamel-Dumonceau, a universal scholar, had affirmed the identity of the electric fluid with lightning.² Franklin developed this idea, constructed its theory, then proved it by courageous experiments, which were executed simultaneously in France by Dalibard and Lemonnier (1752).

We at length arrive at natural history proper, and its highest branch, the science of animated nature. During the first half of

¹ To him belongs the classification of the salts.

² Among innumerable works on botany, agronomy, physics, and chemistry, we are indebted to him for the first theory of fertilizers. — Concerning his claims, see Hoëffer, *Hist. de la Chimie*, t. II. p. 396.

the century, a sagacious, practical, active, and ingenious mind had inspired a lively interest in some parts of zoölogy. This was Réaumur, who signalized himself by so happily applying physics and natural history to the arts and manufactures, and, reciprocally, the observations gathered in manufacturing processes, to scientific studies. He taught the art of converting iron into steel (1722), and the art of manufacturing tin (1725); and commenced the experiments with respect to porcelain (1727-1739), which were afterwards pursued with full success by the chemists Darcet and Macquer, and which ended in the beautiful invention of the Sèvres porcelain; he invented a new thermometer by the application of an idea of Newton (1731);¹ he recognized, after Palissi, the mysterious interest presented to science by the vast banks of fossil shells, called *falun* in Touraine, and which have since been discovered at so many other points (1720); lastly, after a host of papers on natural history, he published, from 1734 to 1742, his celebrated *Papers for the Service of the History of Insects*, — a true master-piece, unfortunately incomplete. No one has rendered science more attractive. Nothing can be finer or more delicate than the art with which he penetrates into this new and varied world of minute creatures. We feel in him the life, and no longer only the mathematics, of Nature: he was one of the precursors of the brilliant genius that was about to dawn on the natural sciences.

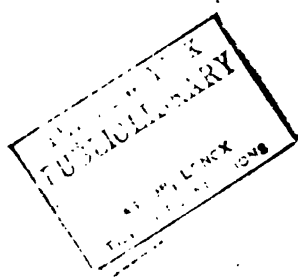
The discoveries multiplied: great facts, important though still isolated laws, were recognized, both in geography and in the zoölogical path opened by Réaumur: for instance, one of the most original and most elevated minds of the age, the Genevese, Charles Bonnet, while still young, perceived that certain insects propagate without coupling (1740), and confirmed by his experiments the yet more astonishing discovery of Trembley concerning the polypi, and concerning several species of worms which are reproduced indefinitely by incision, after the manner of those vegetables which are multiplied by cuttings. These singular beings appear, as is proved by the great botanist Bernard de Jussieu, to connect the two kingdoms of animal life and vegetation; while inorganic nature itself seems linked to living nature by the animal existence verified by Peyssonel in the corals, madrepores, and other motionless inhabitants of the seas.

A lively attention was directed to our earth and the beings that

¹ The construction of this instrument, alone employed in France for a century, rests on the choice of the two extreme points of graduation; namely, the freezing and the boiling of water. A nominal change alone is effected in the number of degrees.



BERNARD DE JUSSIEU.



inhabit it, and to the origin and unknown phases of this earth and these beings. This curiosity redoubled in proportion as a bolder glance was plunged, beyond our atmosphere, into the depths of the sidereal world. When man extends his gaze so far, it becomes necessary, with still greater reason, that he should know his habitation, the races that share it with him, and his own race. It was evident that some great intellect was destined to manifest itself in this direction, that would synthetically connect all these facts and ideas, and fascinate the imagination by converging all these scattered rays into a sun. Nature alone could take the place of an ideal, in some sort, and restore poetry to the restless souls that materialism had banished from the higher worlds.

By the side of these discoveries, and super-excited by them, the hypotheses so much reviled by Voltaire and the experimental school still existed in the natural sciences, and maintained therein a salutary fermentation. A book, a medley of reveries, suppositions without foundation, and profound views, the *Telliamed*, or *Conversations of an Indian Philosopher and a French Missionary*,¹ had just excited much astonishment and a kind of scandal. The author advanced the theory therein, that the mountains were formed by the currents of the sea, as was proved by the deposits of marine substances and shells scattered through the interior of the earth; and that all living beings, man included, sprang from the sea. Voltaire greatly ridiculed the *fish-man*, and the mountains formed of shells; but the *Neptunian* system did not appear so ridiculous to every one.

All these attempts were preludes to great things which were about to appear.

On an eminence overlooked by a long range of hills of rugged aspect, amidst a landscape somewhat contemplative and solitary, although in the vicinity of the little Burgundian town of Montbard, an old tower rises in the midst of a wood of evergreens. It was in this domain, a few leagues from the country of Bossuet, that the child was born, September 7, 1707, that was destined to be the rival in eloquence of the author of the *Discourse on Universal History*, the Bossuet of naturalism. Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon, the son of a parliamentary counsellor of Dijon, showed himself resolved, from his earliest youth, to devote to the sciences the liberty and means of action insured to him by a large fortune. He manifested at first, however, no special vocation, and exer-

¹ The posthumous work of an ex-consul of France in Egypt, by the name of Maillet, who had disguised his name under the anagram of Telliamed. He died in 1738.

cised his mind largely in different branches of human knowledge, in which zoölogy did not figure. He travelled over a part of France and Italy, and visited the Alps with two English friends, whom he then accompanied to their own country. These were the only travels of this man, who was unceasingly to journey over the whole earth in thought. He began his career, after his stay in England, by translating Hales's *Vegetable Statics*, and Newton's treatise on *Fluxions*. As if to pay his tribute to the spirit of the times, he attacked the hypotheses in his preface. Various papers on geometry, physics, and rural and forest economy, made him known on his return from England. Something colossal was already remarked in his imagination and processes. He made his experiments on an enormous scale, and attempted to reconstruct the mirror with which Archimedes stole fire from heaven to burn the enemy's fleets. The Academy of Sciences had summoned him to its midst at the age of twenty-six: the most sagacious among the scholars had a presentiment of his future. In 1739, the intendant of the Royal Jardin des Plantes, Dufay, an estimable physicist and naturalist, felt himself wasting away, while still young, with a languishing disease. The Jardin des Plantes had been, till his time, little more than a branch of the Faculty of Medicine. He had begun to enlarge its collections and instruction, and comprehended that something greater might be undertaken therein. He signed, with a dying hand, a request to the minister to give him Buffon as a successor. Buffon accepted this noble legacy, which decided his destiny, and furnished him the means of fixing and realizing the vast but still vague ideas which were revolving in his brain. He resolved to make the Jardin des Plantes the temple of Nature, and to become its high priest and historian.

Natural history thenceforth became the sole end of his brilliant faculties. Endowed with an extraordinary strength of will, for nearly sixty years he devoted the same number of hours every day to labor. Neither the pleasures of youth nor the infirmities of old age ever encroached upon his study. In his youth he caused himself to be dragged out of bed by violence at five in the morning, after returning at two from suppers in Paris. Of a powerful but incomplete organization, he was strengthened by what he lacked as much as by what he possessed. His serenity and equableness reposed less on the harmony of the essential elements of the man than on the atrophy of the element which gives birth to tempests, — the absence of the passions of



Engraved by Robert Hart

BUFFON.

*From an original picture by Boucher in the
collection of the Institute of France.*



the heart. Every thing was sacrificed to the intellect. The physical life was not repressed in him, as in ascetic thinkers; it was, on the contrary, carelessly abandoned to instinct; while all the moral life was concentrated in science, — loved at once for itself, and as the instrument of glory. Glory was his only passion. Neither the love of women nor the hatred of social abuses excited or troubled his soul. The love of humanity, instead of the militant form of the times, took the scientific form in him. He loved humanity by enlightening it, by enlarging its horizon. He did not take as his motto, like another more devoted and more unfortunate great man, *Vitam impendere vero*;¹ while serving the truth, or what he believed to be such, he veiled it at times: he was always circumspect; he sacrificed much to obtain permission to pursue his work in peace. The magnificence of this work is his excuse before posterity.

What prodigious visions must have assailed him when Nature presented herself to him as a single being, whose forms he was to describe, and whose vicissitudes he was to recount; when the plan of a general history of the earth, and of life upon the earth, flashed upon his brain! Conception soars on eagle's wings: execution drags itself along at a snail's pace, even with the strongest and the most active. A whole existence does not suffice to realize the thought of a moment; and Buffon was destined, to use the expression of the great historian of the literature of the eighteenth century,² to journey over but a few radii of the great circle that he had traced. He lacked the preparatory studies: he strove to supply the deficiency by the power of labor and meditation.³ He saw before him a beacon that would guide him over the obscure ocean of beings, — what was afterwards termed the theory of *necessary facts*, a true torch indeed to that physical world in which every thing is submissive to laws rigorously linked together. The idea was sublime, but rashly audacious. What human eye would not be troubled by the concatenation of *necessary facts*? Descartes had been lost therein! . . . It is not by such rashness that the human mind advances.

Physical organs were lacking in Buffon, as well as special studies. His near-sightedness unfitted him for observation. He completed himself by associating with him his fellow-countryman, Daubenton, a skilful and indefatigable experimenter, who was the

¹ *The mind, he says, is the best crucible.*

² M. Villemain.

³ To sacrifice life to truth: the motto of Rousseau.

eye and hand where Buffon was the thought.¹ Buffon treated the general points of geology alone, shared the zoological studies with Daubenton, and merely touched theoretically upon botany; abandoning this science to the two brothers Jussieu, Antoine, and Bernard, well worthy, by their extended and generalizing minds, to walk by the side of Buffon in the path of natural philosophy.² The *Cabinet of Natural History* was created by their united efforts.³

After ten years' incubation, the thought of Buffon burst forth. The first three volumes of the *Natural History* appeared in 1749. The public stood thrilled with astonishment before the majesty of the subject and the language. Instead of the curt phraseology, the flashing strokes, of Montesquieu, instead of the winged speech of Voltaire, there was again found the ample phraseology of the ancients,—the full and harmonious periods, joined to the French clearness. It was the language of exposition and affirmation, instead of that of discussion and combat; it was the ideas of the modern times expressed with the solemn accent of the seventeenth century and of Roman antiquity. If there is no human genius that equals the majesty of Nature, as Buffon says with excusable hyperbole, it may be said, at least, that never have the marvels of the universe been celebrated in a language more worthy of them.

A great number of wits through frivolity, and a part of the scholars through other motives, saw little at first in Buffon but the great *colorist*, the *style*. Buffon himself aided in this by his maxim, *The style is the man*; but it is necessary to know how to interpret this. "The style is only the order and spirit which one employs in his thoughts;" that is, the whole work, except the inspiration and the general plan. "The style should engrave ideas, and not words. . . . Ideas alone form the foundation of style: the harmony of words is only accessory. . . . A fine style is such only through the infinite number of truths that it presents."⁴

The masses, on their side, abandoned themselves to the impres-

¹ Daubenton was something more: he "was the first to comprehend the general principle, the common link between all the facts which were to serve as a basis to comparative anatomy. He took man as the term of relation, and the animals as the terms of comparison." — Serres, *Organogénie*, ap. *Encyclop. nouvelle*, t. VII. p. 14.

² The Jussieu family was to be in botany what the Cassini family was in astronomy and geodesy. A third brother, Joseph, had shared, as botanist, the fatigues and perils of the expedition of La Condamine, Bouguer, and Godin, to Peru.

³ It had been at first only a simple collection of medicinal plants. Dufay had begun by adding minerals: Buffon outlined the zoological galleries, which attained their magnificent growth only with Étienne Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire.

⁴ *Discours de réception à l'Académie française*, 1758.

sion of force and grandeur which they received, without analyzing it over-much ; but the men capable of comprehending what Buffon calls the *foundation of style*, that is, the conceptions clothed in this magnificent dress, were penetrated with a conscientious and profound admiration. Their sentiment enlightened and conquered that of the masses in proportion as the colossal work of Buffon extended with his glory, during nearly forty years. Nevertheless, Buffon was not to be completely and finally appreciated till our day.

From the beginning, he ascended alone straight to the summit which attracted him, while pointing out the danger of the beaten paths. He saw the sciences already involved in that obscure labyrinth of detailed facts in which they threatened to become scattered by breaking the bond that united them. "The metaphysics of the sciences," he says, "is neglected more perhaps than in any other age : men lose themselves in the methods of calculation and geometry, in formulas and nomenclatures." And he warmly attacks classifications, as arbitrary divisions of what is connected together in Nature by infinitely multiplied transitions. "There are neither *genuses* nor *species* in Nature ; there are only individuals."¹ It is an error to believe that Nature works only on a single plan : the variety of her design and operations is infinite. It is an error to deduce one being from another, one kingdom from another.

One would say, from such words, that he perceived only the variety, and not the unity, of Nature ; but this would be mistaking his true thought. This variety appeared to him as forming an order, a chain, a *serie* or series of almost insensible degrees, extending in every direction from the most perfect being to the most shapeless matter. It is the divisions of this chain that he denied : he saw it continued, and not subdivided.² In scholastic terms, he admitted of no other *universal* than Nature.

¹ He soon arrived at quite an opposite opinion as to species.

² See *Hist. Naturelle, premier Discours ; de la Manière d'étudier et de traiter l'histoire naturelle*. It was in the *Contemplation de la Nature*, published from 1764 to 1765 by Charles Bonnet, one of the most eminent adepts of natural philosophy, that the chain of beings was presented under the aspect of a continuous scale in a single series. Buffon expressed no formal opinion in this respect ; but what he says against the unity of the plan of Nature seems to set aside in advance the system of Bonnet, and to favor the theory formulated in our days by M. Isidore Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire on the *Parallel Series*. — See also the indications contained in the article *Choucas*, *Hist. des Oiseaux*. As to the idea of the unity of type, it is not implied in the negation of the unity of the plan of Nature. Buffon had not yet touched upon this idea.

Buffon was right on divers points in his criticisms of his contemporary and rival, the Swede Linnæus, the prince of classifiers, who in 1735 had drawn the outline, with a genius as profound as patient, of a general method of the two organic kingdoms of Nature. Nevertheless, the warfare waged by Buffon against methods was exaggerated, and opposed, in its farthest consequences, to the interests of science. If classifications have no absolute value, and cannot embrace all the natural relations of beings, they are not, however, arbitrary, since they embrace a part of these relations, and are the more valuable according as they embrace the more. They are the necessary conceptions of the human mind; and Buffon himself was obliged to make one, since he classed objects and beings according to the relation that they bear to man, and especially to the civilized European, — a method very unscientific, and which, moreover, he finally abandoned, in the course of his labors, to approach Linnæus, and to endeavor to improve by the hand of the master whom he had decried.¹

If he disdained special methods too much at first, he laid down the general and transcendent method in terms worthy of Descartes. "The exact description and knowledge of particular facts is not the whole of natural history. It is necessary to rise from these to something greater; that is, to generalize facts, to connect them together by force of analogies, and to strive to arrive at the knowledge of the general effects, the causes of the particular facts, secondary causes to which the mind at least can rise, since the true causes are beyond its reach."

He immediately applied these principles: from the abstract region where he had hovered for a moment, he pounced like an eagle upon his subject, and took possession of our globe before touching the beings that people it. He summed up and arranged, in the *History and Theory of the Earth*, the labors and observations of the Réaumurs, the Bourguets, the Buaches, and so many other pioneers of geology since the aged Palissi, as he was to do, in

¹ See his admirable work on apes. The method of Linnæus, improved, has subsisted in zoölogy. In botany itself, Linnæus only paused provisionally at a classification founded on a single characteristic, that of sex, and sought the more general and natural method, which was pursued at the same time among us by Bernard de Jussieu, and which they both found. It was Jussieu that brought back from England, in his hat, the famous *cedar of Lebanon*, the parent of all the cedars which exist in France. The acclimation in France of many foreign vegetables is due to him. Another French botanist, Adanson, likewise attained the natural method, that which attaches itself to the most general and most comprehensive characteristics, in his *Familles des Plantes* (1763). He had conceived the gigantic plan of a complete natural encyclopædia.



SIR CHARLES LINNÆUS.



the history of organized beings, with respect to the discoveries of the Peyssonels, the Duhamel-Dumonceaux, the Needhams, the Bonnets, the Trembleys, etc. He added his conclusions; and his *Theory of the Earth*, completed thirty years after by his immortal work, *The Epochs of Nature*, will forever remain the foundation of the science which reveals to man the annals of the ages prior to the human race, history before history,—history which is computed, not by centuries, but by unknown periods, which were written on the surface of the globe by the primitive fire, or the ocean, its successor.

The *History of the Earth* is indeed, as its author says, a *theory*; that is, a generalization of known facts, connected together by probable inductions, and not a *system*; that is to say, an arbitrary hypothesis invented *à priori*. Buffon does not even yet affirm therein the primitive incandescence of the globe: he explicitly affirms only the long continuance of the sea upon our continents, a continuance altogether foreign and prior to the biblical deluge, and attested by so many immense deposits of marine animals, the probable displacement of the bed of the sea in the ante-historic ages, the formation of the greater part of the terrestrial strata by the waters, and some other great phenomena proceeding from the same *Neptunian* cause. He presents separately, in the papers entitled *Proofs of the Theory of the Earth*, an hypothesis concerning the formation of the globe, upon which he by no means bases all his positive views concerning Nature. This hypothesis is that the earth and the other planets are merely fragments of the sun, detached from its body by collision with a comet. Science has demonstrated the impossibility of Buffon's idea. Another, happier hypothesis is common to Leibnitz and Buffon: namely, that our planet was at first in a state of fiery liquefaction; that it was in this state that it took its form; and that the interior of the earth must therefore be a vitrified and still warm mass. But to Buffon alone belongs the conjectural history of the transition from the primitive *Vulcanian* state to the *Neptunian* state, a true revelation of genius. Whatever, indeed, may have been the primitive state, and whatever may be the present state of the centre of the globe, the two successive reigns of fire and water on the surface can no longer be doubted.

"This man," exclaimed the sceptic Hume, with stupefaction, on reading the first volumes of Buffon,—“this man gives, to things which no human eye has seen, a probability almost equal to evidence.”

This burst of admiration would have been still better justified by the truly unequalled book in which Buffon, a septuagenarian, in 1778, gave the finishing stroke to the labors of half a century, and vivified the final conceptions of his science by an unheard-of power of imagination. *The Epochs of Nature* seem written on granite by some Titan, the contemporary of the successive revolutions and progress of our planet. They are no longer scientific discussions and considerations, but cosmogomy itself evoked from the uttermost depths of time. We behold the boiling of the burning mass of the planet in fusion; we see it sink towards the poles and swell at the equator by the gradual diminution of this immense heat. The vitrified mass hardens. The primitive mountains rise like blisters on the surface of a gigantic globe of melted metal. The heat continues to decrease; the ethereal ocean of vapors that floated around the globe condenses, falls back, and covers the face of the earth. Life appears: the innumerable beings, the remains of which are to furnish the calcareous rocks, are born in the waters. Prodigious caverns, hollowed at the same time that the mountains rose, by an inverse effect, sink deeper, swallow up a part of the ocean, and uncover the continents. The vegetable kingdom is born,¹—the primitive vegetation which is to be transformed into coal, bitumen, and peat, like the first animals into conchiferous rocks. The volcanoes are kindled by the struggle of the waters and the internal fire. The new rocks and the secondary mountains are formed by the sea, which alternately invades and abandons the different parts of the firm earth, and which determines the figure of the continents by the direction of its movements. The separation of the two great continents, at first united at the north, and the rupture of several isthmuses, which puts the vast gulfs, lakes, or interior seas again in communication with the ocean, finally gives to the earth its present aspect. Life, however, improves its forms: the quadrupeds and the other land animals are born near the poles, and descend towards the equator, as well as the vegetables, in proportion as the earth cools. The proportions of these first-born of the earth are gigantic, formed as they are under the empire of a still enormous caloric power; but the animal creation is neither unique nor uniform. The great and primitive appearance of the quadrupeds takes place at the north of Asia, whence they spread to the rest of our hemisphere and

¹ Buffon thus makes the birth of vegetation subsequent to that of the animals, instead of admitting a primitive maritime vegetation corresponding with the primitive animals.

North America before the separation of the continents: but South America remains closed to our animal races; it has its separate creation, more recent and weaker.¹

The great and last work of creation, MAN, appears at last, after the quadrupeds, in the high lands of the north of Asia, and closes the genesis of our planet. There is only one human race, which is modified by the climates and the different conditions of existence. The first men, weak and miserable, unite, arm themselves, take possession of the element of fire, and settle the earth by agriculture. The first community is organized on the high tablelands of Asia, between the fortieth and fifty-fifth degrees of north latitude.² The revolutions of Nature and the war of the elements are succeeded by the revolutions and wars of the human race. *Six hundred centuries* were needed for Nature to attain an orderly and peaceful state: how many will it need for men to arrive at the same point? If the world were at peace, how much influence would the power of man have over that of Nature, by entirely applying itself thereto! What modifications have already been wrought by the clearing and draining of lands, the domestication of animals, the cultivation and grafting of plants, and the peopling of uninhabited territories! What moral and physical progress is still to be hoped from the human species! The superstitious terrors which bowed it before threatening and unknown phenomena have been dispelled in proportion as it has seen tranquillity reëstablished in Nature, and has learned to comprehend its operations. Fear and false honor at first ruled the human race; then blind and sterile pleasure reigned: now man at length perceives that his true glory is science; and his true happiness, peace.

¹ This great fact, divined by Buffon, has been not only confirmed, but amplified, by modern discoveries. Australia has also its separate animal series; and something analogous has been discovered in the Island of Madagascar, which is perhaps the remnant of a continent distinct from Africa. We cannot even mention here the many other admirable laws revealed by Buffon touching the distribution of beings over the surface of the globe.

² It was precisely in this region that the mysterious *Arya* was located, the traditions of which have been discovered in our days by philology and ethnography, and where the ancestors of our Indo-European race lived in proximity to the Semitic, Canaanitish, and Mongolian races. Buffon seems to have borrowed this idea from Bailli's *Histoire de l'Astronomie ancienne*, published in 1775 and the years following. Bailli went farther: in conformity with ingenious conjectures, the bases of which have been overthrown by science, he fancied that he discerned there the traces of a high primitive civilization anterior to the historic ages. Buffon believes, therefore, that Europe was peopled from Asia, then North America from the North of Asia and Europe; and that men crossed the Isthmus of Panama, the mountains of which arrested the animals, and spread thence through South America.

This magnificent history of the earth terminates thus with a hymn to human perfectibility.

The errors that may be pointed out in the *Epochs of Nature* pertained to the very imperfect state of science:¹ the truths were Buffon's.

The power with which Buffon discerned, through the darkness of ages, the succession of the general effects of Nature, will doubtless remain his chief claim to glory. He attempted to penetrate farther, and to lay hold of those causes, that essence of things, which, according to himself, is inaccessible to our mind. The grandeur here is still the same, but without the clearness. The variations and contradictions into which the force of the imagination at times hurries away this vast intellect still serve at least successively to bring vividly to view the different phases of the *Isis of a thousand names*. It cannot indeed be said that Buffon is deficient in metaphysical genius: but he lacks method; he does not always observe Descartes' precept concerning clear and distinct ideas, or his own concerning the order and concatenation of thoughts.

On putting aside the veil in which Buffon shrouds his ideas, desirous as he is of not following the philosophical party in its open conflict with traditional beliefs,² on seeking to know what was at heart the religion of this prophet of Nature, we discern these ideas, we do not say at which he paused, but among which he fluctuated, about the middle of his scientific career, a few years after the publication of his first volumes, and which are, so to speak, the spirit of the *History of Animals*.

¹ The gravest of these errors relates to the progressive cooling of the globe. Nature, according to Buffon, will perish by cold within ninety-three thousand years. He was ignorant of what science has since established; namely, that the earth's own heat, increasing in proportion as we descend into the interior of the globe, at least to an unknown depth, is almost nothing on the surface in comparison with the solar heat. The complete internal cooling would not, therefore, produce a polar temperature over the whole surface of the earth. Mairan was the first to point out the earth's innate heat, which he attributed to a central fire; but he erroneously believed this heat greater than that of the sun, and Buffon erred in his footsteps. Buffon allowed the earth, from the moment that it began to cool, about seventy-five thousand years' existence. The first organized beings began to appear about the middle of this period. These figures, which appear prodigious to the reader's imagination, disappear before the almost immeasurable depth of time calculated since by Fourier as necessary for this same cooling.

² Warmly attacked by the Jansenist journal, *Nouvelles ecclésiastiques*, as early as 1750, he was censured by the Sorbonne in 1754, after the publication of the fourth volume of the *Histoire Naturelle*. He protested his submission to the Church, and gave the Sorbonne all the satisfaction that it required: by way of compensation, he raised the veil a little higher than he had yet done, in the following volumes, in which are found the *Vues sur la Nature*.

Nature is a vital, immense, and universal power which embraces every thing and animates every thing. It neither creates nor annihilates any thing: it changes, dissolves, and regenerates. Time, space, and matter are its means. It acts on matter by general forces which are limited and measured by space and time. The principal ones of these forces are attraction and repulsion, the second of which is reducible to the first, and heat. Matter is divided into molecules, some of which are in the inorganic state, subject only to attraction and repulsion; others, penetrated by heat, are raised to the organic and living state: life and animation are a physical property of matter, and not a metaphysical degree of being. The inorganic bodies are simple aggregates: this is not the case with respect to the organized bodies. Here a new principle intervenes: it is indeed the action of heat which causes the organic molecules to group themselves in combination with the inorganic particles which they draw with them; but the form of these groupings, the diversity of beings, is determined by another cause,— by special forces, *internal moulds*, in which the individuals of the same species take form successively and indefinitely by means of generation.¹ The apparent individuals are merely phenomena; they are nothing in the universe: the species are the only beings in Nature, perpetual beings, as ancient and as permanent as Nature herself. Each species makes but a single unit in Nature, who disregards numbers in individuals, and sees them only as fleeting shadows of which the species is the substance.²

We see how much his conceptions have changed since the time when he proclaimed that there are neither genuses nor species in Nature, but only individuals. Now he still denies the genuses, the small families in the great ones, but he substitutes species for individuals. He has passed over a transition at which he should have stopped: namely, that the individual is the only real being; that the species is a necessary abstraction, a conception founded on the nature of things,³ but which may be extended from species to genuses. He was to return to it.

¹ The *internal moulds* of Buffon are nothing else than the plastic force or substantial forms of ancient scholastic philosophy.

² By carrying these principles to their ultimate consequences, it is found, that, if individuals are nothing but phenomena, species are nothing but forms, animating forces: the only real beings are the molecules, if, however, the molecules are not indefinitely divisible (and metaphysics demonstrates that they are); in which case there is only one real being, the universal substance, Nature. Our summary is taken chiefly from the *Vues sur la Nature*, intercalated into the *Hist. des Animaux*.

³ *Hist. naturelle*, t. IV. ch. de l'Âne, 1753.

now find the transition from the scepticism of Berkeley to the transcendental idealism of Fichte. The sincerity of Buffon can no longer be doubted here as in his hymns to the God of Moses.¹ Poetic figures are no longer in question: there is nothing in all his work more strongly reasoned than that which concerns the unity and personality of the human soul. There are arguments therein to which none can reply. An illustrious historian has remarked with astonishment that Buffon seems much more fully persuaded of the immortality of the soul than of the existence of God. Buffon, in fact, in this, as in many other things, is the antipodes of Voltaire.

The logic of common sense did not stop at these anomalies of philosophic genius. Atheism² and materialism remained united to the multitude, although it was less rare to meet men in France who believed in God, and doubted the soul, than those who believed in the soul, and did not believe in the personality of God.

It is singular that it should have been the philosopher of Nature who undertook to maintain between man and animals an absolute difference which metaphysicians had been inclined to abolish since the days of Leibnitz. The reason was that the spiritualism of Buffon was exaggerated Cartesianism, taken according to the letter rather than the spirit, and approaching Spinozism anew on this side; namely, that reason, understood in the restricted sense of the word, is the soul or the spirit itself, metaphysical unity attributed to man alone. Every thing that is not reason, every thing that is common to man and animals, is material. Sensation and sentiment are to this one and the same thing. The soul remains foreign to it. The sensations or sentiments end only in a certain *internal material sense*, common to man and animals, and which is in Buffon an obscure reminiscence of the second soul, — the *sensitive soul* of the ancients and the scholastics. Condillac, less elevated and less sublime, but more exact, more logical, and more rigorous in defining his terms, completely refutes him in his remarkable *Treatise on Animals*, and shows clearly that sensation is in the soul as well as in the thought; that to feel, it is necessary to have a soul, a unity; and that the animals have this.³

¹ M. Villemain.

² We employ this term in the popular acceptance with regret; for naturalism ascribes to the word *Nature* a mystical sense much better rendered by the term of Pantheism than by that of Atheism.

³ By way of compensation, Buffon clearly establishes, in opposition to Condillac and Helvetius, that the superiority of man over the animals is not the effect of a greater degree of perfection of organs.

The metaphysics of Buffon has strange moral consequences. He condemns the passions of the heart and imagination as errors of the *internal material sense*. Our soul has been given us to know, and not to feel. The sage is sufficient unto himself. "Why does love make the happiness of all animals, and the unhappiness of man? Because nothing but the physical part of this passion is good: the moral part is worth nothing." He sees in the moral part of love nothing but vanity. "In wishing to force himself upon sentiment, man only abuses his being, and makes a void in his heart which nothing is capable of filling."¹

The normal man of Buffon would be, therefore, a man devoid of the best part of the human soul, an intellect without affection.²

There are still, however, happily for the *Natural History*, contradictions here between the theorist and the observing painter and poet. After denying moral love in man, he discovers and admires it in certain animals, especially in the birds, the lasting attachments and domestic habits of which he depicts with so much grace, and even emotion. In his descriptions of animals, he often forgets systems to abandon himself to the naïve inspiration of things. He interests himself in his heroes, in all those inhabitants of the earth and air which he follows, with the eye of the mind, to the recesses of their deserts and forests. He pities their tribes, subjugated and degenerating under the tyranny of man. He seems speaking of fallen peoples when he shows the superior races attempting to organize themselves, with a gleam of intelligence, a kind of choice, concert, and common views, then dispersed by the terror of man, and *diminishing in faculties and talents*.

"What they have become, and what they will still become, does not, perhaps, indicate sufficiently what they have been, and what they might still be. Who knows, if the human race were annihilated, to which among them would belong the sceptre of the earth?" He thus grants them perfectibility; and his imagination carries him so far as to make of them moral beings, some species good and generous, others cruel and perfidious, — almost virtuous or criminal species: he ascribes to them sentiments and conduct in accordance with the rank and character assigned to them by antique symbolism, according to external usages.

It is precisely this that makes the *Natural History* a unique book, the very faults of which, in a scientific point of view, are

¹ *Discours sur la nature des animaux.*

² He excuses friendship, however, since it is an attachment of the reason, and not a passion.

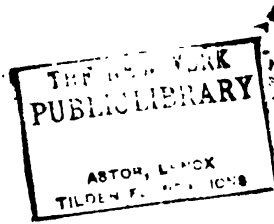
cartes. If his eye was troubled on the dizzy heights of metaphysics, he saw clearly in the immensity of the external world; and the temple which he erected to Nature will forever remain the object of the admiration of men, though its sanctuary is veiled with a cloud.¹

The theories of Buffon were not immediately followed by a great direct growth: the majority of the special scholars, whom he had offended by his unjust disdain of the classifications of Linnæus, rejected his authority; the public admired rather than comprehended him; but the enthusiasm for Nature reacted in a general manner on the militant philosophy. Naturalism, partially veiled by the prudence of Buffon, and combated in him by a remnant of Cartesian metaphysics, broke forth in another writer of very different character, as impetuous, as overflowing, and as full of unreservedness and daring, as Buffon was solemn and reticent; a writer, moreover, inspired by his own spontaneity, more than by the example or influence of any one whomsoever.

Denis Diderot, born in 1713, the son of a cutler of Langres, reared among the Jesuits, like Voltaire, and destined at first to the ecclesiastical profession, then an attorney's clerk at Paris, early manifested a very lively taste for the ancient and modern languages, mathematics, and every branch of knowledge accessible to the human mind, together with an insurmountable repugnance to confining himself to any special vocation whatever. Abandoned by his father on account of his refusal to adopt a profession, he lived long by expedients, testing the prodigious elasticity of his independent nature by innumerable petty ills; enduring poverty sometimes with careless gayety, sometimes with bitterness speedily forgotten, and preferring free fancy to every thing. His marriage to a young girl as poor as himself, an honest creature, but too much inferior to him in intellect, and of a character different from his own, effected his reconciliation with his family, but did not long fix the mobility of his passions. He had begun to write. At the solicitation of a mercenary and needy mistress, he made for a publisher an imitation rather than a translation of the *Essay on Merit and Virtue* by Shaftesbury, the friend of Locke (1745); a singular beginning of a career full of

¹ On Buffon, see his *Éloge*, by Vicq-d'Azyr; id., by Condorcet; Étienne Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire, *Encyclopédie nouvelle*, art. BUFFON; Cuvier, *Biographie universelle*, art. BUFFON; Flourens, *Vie de Buffon*; Villemain, *Tableau de la littérature française au XVIII. siècle*, t. I. 2d part, p. 351; Hérault de Séchelles, *Une visite à Montbard*; Madame Necker, *Mémoires*.





contrasts. The principles of Shaftesbury, to which Diderot seemed at that time to subscribe, were those of true *theism*, as he calls it; that is, not of the materialistic and inconsistent Deism of Bolingbroke and Voltaire, but of spiritualistic and Platonic Deism, such as was about to reappear gloriously in France. Shaftesbury was a precursor of Rousseau. "There is no virtue," he says, "without believing in God; there is no happiness without virtue."¹ Diderot does not throw much emphasis into this book: it is neither the impassioned cry of the heart, nor the expression of a profound meditation of the intellect.

A second work, this time original, dictated by the same pecuniary necessities, soon appeared anonymously: this was *The Philosophic Thoughts* (1747), animated by that vigor of tone and warm coloring which were to be the distinctive characteristics of the author. There is still some Deism in *The Thoughts*. We find here the saying, so much quoted, "*Enlarge God; show him to the child, not in the church, but everywhere and always.*" Nevertheless, at the bottom, scepticism rules. Spiritual feeling, the feeling of the abstract and invisible, is absolutely lacking in the author, although he is a mathematician; the feeling of external nature, of the visible and the imaginable, is very powerful in him: we feel flesh and blood palpitating everywhere in Diderot, like the nerves and the subtlest senses in Voltaire. The philosophy of pure reason being incompatible with his native tendencies, he might have paused at that of sentiment, as the infant Scotch school was doing at this moment under Hutcheson, and as a more brilliant genius was about to do in France: but the ardor of flesh and blood, the spirit of dispute and paradox, the false method which sought to subject the operations of the soul either to the demonstrations of geometry or the experimental observations of the physical sciences; lastly, that species of vanity which instinctively impels some minds always to wish to exceed the boldest in daring,—made him disregard, not the principle of sentiment, but its consequences, and what may be called its method, and drew him into all kinds of excesses of ideas.

Vast projects were fermenting in his brain: while he was preparing for their execution, two remarkable writings were suggested

¹ Shaftesbury, like Newton, had foreseen the consequences of the system of Locke, and made grave reservations: he would have acknowledged, had he lived, the brilliant protest of Clarke against sensualism. — See the *Cours d'Histoire de la Philosophie moderne* by M. Cousin, first series, t. IV.; *École écossaise, Introduction*. — See *Essai sur le Mérite*, etc., in t. I., *Œuvres de Diderot*, Paris, Brière, 1821.

to him by the experiments which the philanthropic and scientific genius of the times was then making to restore to intercourse with their fellows those unfortunates whom Nature puts in some sort outside of humanity; namely, *The Letter on The Blind* (1748), and *The Letter on the Deaf Mutes* (1751); the first on occasion of the operations which Réaumur and others were successfully attempting for the removal of cataract, the second with respect to the labors of Pereira, the precursor of the illustrious Abbé de L'Épée, who had presented to the Academy of Sciences, in 1748, deaf mutes educated by his care. *The Letter on the Blind* contained numerous observations and considerations as learned as ingenious, but mingled with unsound and purely negative views. Diderot attacked therein, through the medium of Saunderson, a blind scholar, who had recently died in England, the proofs of Divine Providence founded on the order of the world, and made him put forward a pretended chaos, from which Nature rose by degrees to an imperfect order by force of different combinations, as if Nature were a being endowed with reflection, a demiurge of limited intellect taught to do better by means of schools. The conclusion in favor of the God of Clarke and Newton seems little more than oratorical precaution.

This *Letter*, the authorship of which was discovered by the police, cost Diderot three months' imprisonment at Vincennes; a captivity celebrated in the annals of philosophy, and to which we shall revert. The irreligious escapade of Saunderson was the pretext: the true cause was a jest which had piqued a mistress of the Count d'Argenson.

The Letter on the Deaf Mutes presented interesting views concerning the order in which ideas appear to the deaf mute, and what Diderot calls the natural order or the *animal language*: it is probable that the Abbé de L'Épée profited thereby.¹

These writings, mixed with mathematical labors, had merely been episodes to Diderot, then occupied with a colossal enterprise which was to remain his chief glory. Some publishers, in 1748, had proposed to him to translate the English Encyclopædia of Chambers, compiled, in great part, from French books. A great thought illuminated the brain and inspired the heart of Diderot.

¹ This *Letter* also contains a very striking estimate of the French language, "better suited," he says, "to the sciences and philosophy, and less to poetry and eloquence, than the Greek, Latin, Italian, or English. It is the language of the mind and of good sense: the others are the languages of the imagination and the passions. Our language will be that of Truth, should she ever return to earth." — See *Œuvres de Diderot*, t. II., 1821. A reservation should be made with respect to eloquence.

More than one attempt had been made, as early as the sixteenth century, and even the Middle Ages, to unite in one framework the general picture of human knowledge ; but the sciences were then too poor in facts, and too devoid of method, for these first encyclopædias to be any thing more than shapeless embryos. The immense progress effected within a hundred and fifty years made Diderot judge that the moment had come to collect and consecrate the fruits of this progress, and to shelter the deposit of the knowledge of man from revolutions, in order to secure it for posterity, *the being that never dies*. The imperfect publication of Chambers could serve only as a starting-point. Diderot associated himself with D'Alembert, the man best fitted, by his science and his orderly and persevering mind, to share the direction of this prodigious work. Both invited the coöperation of choice writers of all kinds, and succeeded in forming a most imposing literary lay association, destined to do for the sum of human knowledge, in the spirit of modern times, what the learned congregations of Catholicism had done for theology and erudition. All the great names of the eighteenth century were found therein. Nothing less was dreamed of than the universal monument of the human mind, the Bible of perfectibility.

The prospectus of the *Encyclopædia* was issued by Diderot in November, 1750. The sentiment of utility, of positive applications and improvements, is the prevailing idea in this fragment of a great composition. Diderot states therein that the work has a twofold object: first, the *Encyclopædia* proper, that is, the genealogical tree, the order and concatenation of human knowledge ; secondly, the analytical dictionary of the sciences, arts, and trades. This second object was the essential one, to which the other was only the introduction. The encyclopedical order was arbitrary in his sight: he treated it as Buffon treated classifications. Nature is a unit, says Buffon: Science is a unit, adds Diderot with Condillac. This is true ; but in the unity of Science, as in that of Nature, there are fundamental divisions pertaining to the essence of things: indeed, to discern these essential diversities in unity, other metaphysics are needed than that of Locke or Condillac. Diderot refers, as authority for the system which he has adopted as being relatively the best, to Bacon, "that extraordinary genius, who, laying the plan of a universal dictionary of the arts and sciences at a time when there were, so to speak, neither arts nor sciences, . . . in the presence of the impossibility of writing the history of what was known, wrote the history of what was to

be learned." This is the finest and best deserved eulogy ever pronounced on Bacon.

The material of the encyclopedical dictionary may be reduced to three heads, — the sciences, the liberal arts, and the mechanical arts. Diderot nobly set forth the views of practical utility which led the authors to connect with the principles of the sciences and liberal arts the history of their origin and progress. Here materials at least abounded, with a few exceptions; but the mechanical arts, hitherto imprisoned in the secrecy of their obscure workshops with the men who cultivated them, were an unknown world to be discovered. Diderot displayed therein an activity, variety, and pliancy of faculties, truly incomparable. He made his way into all the manufactories, and learned and practised almost all the trades in order to be able to describe them. He sums up, in two pages of his *Prospectus*, the labors of Hercules: too often exaggerated and bombastic, he is here simple, because he is truly great. He is fully conscious of the high morality of a work which is the rehabilitation of manual labor, the labor formerly termed *servile*; he constitutes himself the historian, so far as it is possible to be such, of that long series of sacrificed generations who had never possessed a history, and to whom civilization owes its comfort, and intellect its indispensable instruments; he erects a monument to the working-classes "by the exposition of the science of the trades, the admirable legacy of the nameless geniuses of these humiliated classes."¹ By a prophetic instinct, Diderot devoted himself to the glorification of the arts and manufactures at the moment when they were about to enter into that career of marvels hitherto more brilliant, perhaps, than profitable to the real happiness of humanity, but which would furnish to the human race powerful instruments of happiness, when it should have learned how to elevate moral progress to a level with material progress.²

The first two volumes of the *Encyclopædia* speedily followed the *Prospectus* of Diderot. The *Preliminary Dissertation* of D'Alembert, which served as a peristyle to the vast edifice, was received with great applause. He begins, it is needless to say, by

¹ I. Reynaud, *Encyclopédie nouvelle*, art. *Encyclopédie*. M. Reynaud sums up the various encyclopedical systems proposed from Bacon to that the sketch of which he presents.

² From 1765 dates the first of the great inventions by which the Scotchman, James Watt, improving upon the discoveries and machinery of Salomon de Caux, Papin, and Newcomen, applied steam to manufactures, and decupled the manufacturing power, first of England, then of all manufacturing nations.

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D'ALEMBERT.

*From the original Picture by De la Tour
in the Collection of the Institute of France.*

Under the Superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

resolving, according to Locke and Condillac, the problem of the origin of our knowledge: nevertheless, his metaphysics here is much better than might have been expected. He asserts that a kind of instinct, more certain than reason itself, makes us affirm the existence of external objects, including our own bodies; reason demonstrating nothing in this respect. This is an excellent correction of Descartes, and the only possible refutation of idealistic scepticism.

D'Alembert sets out, therefore, from the indubitable existence of our body, and the necessity of preserving it, in order to show the generation of human notions. We shall not follow him in his historical generation of our knowledge, the order of which is open to much dispute: all system on this question of fact will always be contestable, much more than the encyclopedical order itself, which may be reduced to metaphysical principles. As to the acquisition of the ideas of mind and matter, and that of God, he remains within the received notions, and goes so far as to say a few prudent and precautionary words concerning the necessity of revelation; but we cannot attribute to the same cause the opinions which he then emits concerning certainty, when, with the same tendency that he has shown in the instinctive affirmation of the reality of bodies, he lays down the principle of sentiment by the side of rational evidence. Sentiment is of two kinds: first, the conscience, or the sentiment of the good, which is applied to the moral truths, and which has the same power over us as the evidence of the mind attached to the speculative truths, — this may be called *the evidence of the heart*, as the evidence of the mind may be called *the sentiment of the true*; secondly, the sentiment of the beautiful, to which we owe genius and taste, — genius is the sentiment that creates, and taste the sentiment that judges.¹

All this was excellent; it was Descartes corrected and completed with the aid of Pascal: these principles were the same that Hutcheson was teaching at that moment in Scotland, with less precision and luminousness, perhaps, than D'Alembert. It seemed as if the true way was opened. The doctrine of sentiment, applied to the interrogation of the conscience of the human race, suffices to discover all the necessary truths; but abstract principles do not bear their fruits of themselves if the living soul does not fructify them with its breath. Setting out from such premises, D'Alembert ended only in scepticism; Diderot, only in

¹ Diderot, in the article *Beautiful*, denies, however, that the beautiful is exclusively a matter of sentiment, and not of reason and understanding.

horizon. In the article *Authority*, which is very bold in language, he nevertheless still stops short of the transitory nature of the contract between the people and the prince,—a contract which neither the prince nor the people can change. But the article *Law* rises to higher regions. He lays down here the general conscience as the basis of law. “The general will” (the will of the human race), he says expressly, “is always right.” The principle of the SOCIAL CONTRACT is comprised here.

It is impossible even to mention the principal works of the numerous writers of the *Encyclopædia*. We will only seize the opportunity to call to remembrance an eminent and unfortunate man, whom it is not permissible to forget in a review of French thinkers and writers,—the philosopher-grammarian Dumarsais, who died poor and obscure in 1756.

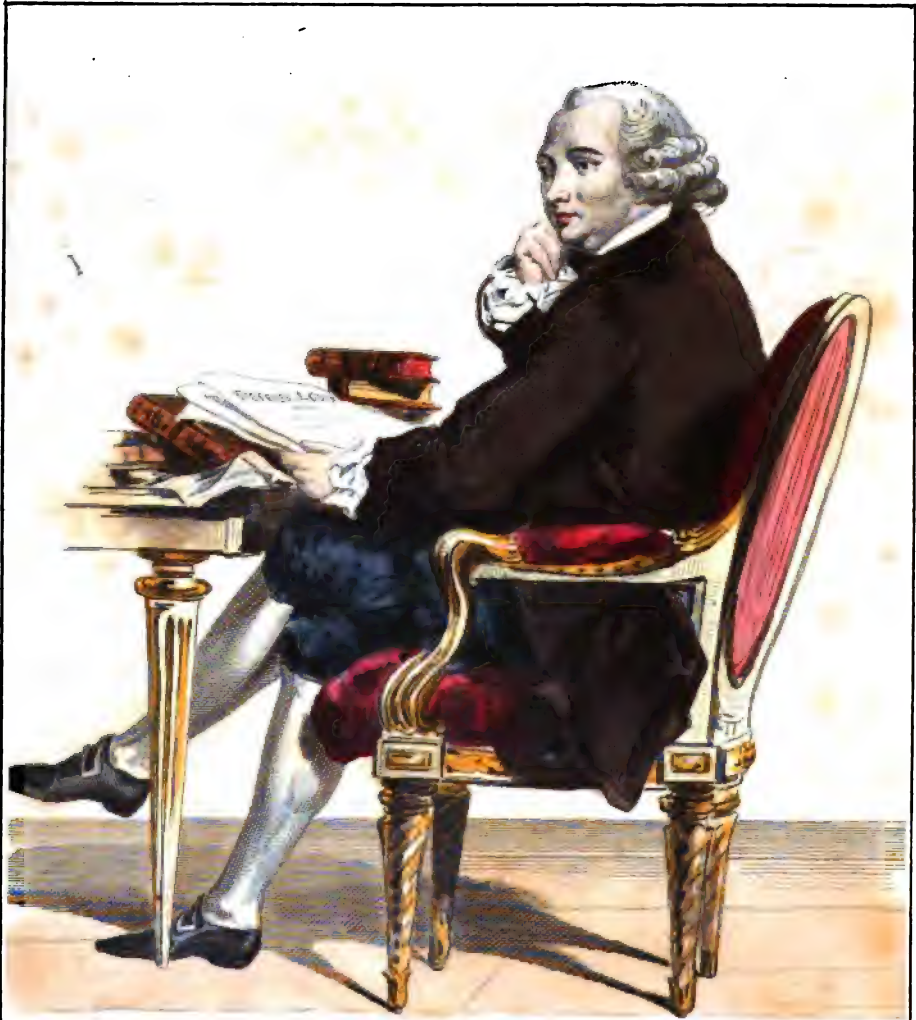
In the columns of the *Encyclopædia* had appeared not only new names, but a school, a new sect, allied with the philosophers without being confounded with them,—the sect of the ECONOMISTS. We shall recur hereafter to their persons and doctrines. On the confines of the two philosophical and economical groups, a young magistrate, whose vast intellect was adapted to every thing and interested in every thing, enriched the *Encyclopædia* by works of the highest scope on the philosophy of history, metaphysics, and philology; but it is not yet time to discuss in detail the name of TURGOT, to whom at that time a great destiny might be predicted.

The bigoted party meanwhile having regained some ascendancy at court, after Damiens' attempt to assassinate the King (1757), the storm against philosophy commenced anew. A royal declaration, of unheard-of violence, was issued against the authors, printers, publishers, and hawkers of writings in contempt of religion and the royal authority, with death in every line. The simple offence of publication without permission led to the galleys for life.¹ This was partly atrocious, and partly ridiculous; for it was almost certain that no one would be hung, and that, should a few unhappy hawkers be sent to the galleys, *lettres de cachet* were the greatest peril that threatened the writers. The declaration remained an idle bugbear. Every thing was confined for some time to a war of the pen,—a shower of anti-philosophical pamphlets paid for by the court and the clergy, and written in general by mercenaries as devoid of talent as of religious faith.² An attempt

¹ *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXII. p. 272, April 16, 1757.

² At the head of these pamphleteers was the critic Fréron, the editor of the journal *L'Année littéraire*, and the prototype of those writers without morality who defend

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THE END OF THE WORLD

was made to turn the weapon of ridicule against the philosophers; and Palissot represented them on the stage in a comedy with Aristophanesque pretensions, which called forth terrible reprisals from Voltaire. The parliament and the Archbishop of Paris at last attacked the *Encyclopædia* directly. The parliament and the council of the King struck at the same time; and the license of the publishers was revoked (March, 1759). Orders had been given to the director of publication, Malesherbes, as in 1752, to seize Diderot's papers. Malesherbes hastened secretly to apprise him of it. "I have not time to sort them," replied the afflicted philosopher. "Send them to my house," said Malesherbes. It was done, and nothing was seized but what Diderot chose.¹

The feeble attempts at persecution by a government served in this manner by its own agents could not go very far. The new directing minister, M. de Choiseul, disliked and somewhat feared the encyclopedists; but he disliked the clergy still more, and was very conciliatory to Voltaire, who thundered against the suspension of the great work, while Pope Clement XIII. applauded it in a brief of September, 1759. Ferney partially prevailed over the Vatican. The police were permitted to shut their eyes to the clandestine resumption of the printing. D'Alembert, however, weary of the prolonged struggle, was no longer willing to participate in the direction. Diderot, more courageous and constant, supported the burden alone to the end. Frederick II., then the Empress of Russia, Catharine II., alike desirous to do themselves honor at the expense of Louis XV., offered Diderot permission, one after the other, to finish the *Encyclopædia* in their States (1760-1768). The adroit Catharine, scarcely seated on a throne red with her husband's blood, was beginning that sys-

through speculation, with a vehemence made to order, the opinions that they do not hold. He was not absolutely without talent; but his worth has been greatly exaggerated in the kind of paradoxical rehabilitation which has been attempted with respect to him. A more honorable adversary of Voltaire was Lefranc de Pompignan, a man of conviction, who rendered himself ridiculous by excessive vanity, but in whom a few flashes of lofty poetry are found. A very curious monument of the reactionary spirit at court exists; namely, a letter in which is found the following passage: "What is becoming of our nation? The parliamentarians and encyclopedists have completely changed it. When one is sufficiently lacking in principle to recognize neither divinity nor master, he soon becomes the scum of nature; and this is what is happening to us." No one would divine who was the austere champion of the throne and altar who thus defended the principles of Bossuet: it was no other than Madame de Pompadour. — Letter to the Duke d'Aiguillon, 1759, ap. Lacretelle, t. IV.

¹ *Mémoires sur Diderot*, by his daughter, Madame de Vandeuil, ap. *Mémoires, Correspondance et Ouvrages inédits de Diderot*, second edition, 1834, t. I. p. 31. — See also *L'Avertissement* prefixed to t. XIII. of the *Œuvres de Diderot*, 1821.

it (1765) was perhaps the trait of his life which did him the most honor, and the least contestable proof of his excellent natural disposition.

New sources of interest were thus opened to the stage at the moment when the change in manners and ideas was cooling the enthusiasm of the public for our great drama of the seventeenth century: ere long, the imitations of Shakspeare by Ducis,¹ and the translation of the works of this mighty genius, unfaithful and distorted as they were, gave an impulse to these tendencies, which Voltaire strove to arrest, by reacting, in the name of the national taste and spirit, against the foreign importations of which he had been the first promoter. The consequences of this literary revolution, which was suspended by a revulsion towards what was termed the *classic*, that is, towards antiquity more or less rightly understood, and which then resumed its course and pursued its phases to our days, oversteps the limits of our work, and belongs to the history of modern France.

Criticism, whether literary or artistic, was not less indebted to Diderot than the theory of the dramatic art. He made it an art of sentiment and imagination, instead of a cold literary anatomy. He sowed the *Correspondance* of Grimm, the *Salons*, etc., with an infinite wealth of imagery and thought:² his sympathetic nature made him invent the *criticism of beauties*,³ more hazardous, but more fruitful perhaps, than the other. We cannot help admiring the power, fertility, variety, and perpetual and universal emotion, of this perpetually throbbing soul; yet we are dazzled by meteors revolving through a stormy sky, rather than lighted and guided by a serene beacon: the reason is that Diderot is pantheistic in art as in philosophy, that his principle is not the ideal, but life under all its forms, without preference, without degrees, and without hierarchy. He makes no distinction in rank between Raphael and Rubens.⁴ This testimony, nevertheless, should be rendered him, that, despite the too often cynical license of his language, he does

¹ Dating from 1769.

² The periodical exhibitions of the works of the painters and sculptors, the members of the Academy, had commenced in 1757. Diderot wrote, from 1761, a series of *Salons*, three only of which had been published at his death: five others have recently been brought to light by a publisher, eager for the renown of Diderot, — M. Walferdin. — See *Revue de Paris* from August to November, 1857.

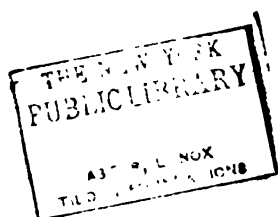
³ Saint-Beuve, art. on Diderot.

⁴ Through the universality of his sympathy, he was the first after the Renaissance to begin to comprehend something of Gothic architecture: he had an acute and profound perception of the nature of the effect produced by it.



Ducis.

Ducis-



not approve of licentious painting, the profanation of art: his sensuality is that of Nature, and not of the Parc-aux-Cerfs; of Rubens, and not of Boucher.

It would be a very difficult thing to draw with any precision the mobile face of Diderot; to model, so to speak, his immense head, the most encyclopedic of the age, which contained every thing, but which so ill arranged what it contained. The sentiment which shut itself up in finite things; which writhed, swelled, and boiled over for want of knowing how to rise into the boundless spheres for which it was made; unrestrained passion, unregulated activity, and the blind effusion of the heart and the senses, yet an exalted admiration of virtue; a very doubtful taste in personal works, and a lack of moderation and propriety in every thing, yet an often exquisite feeling in the appreciation of the works of others; grandiloquence and sincerity; a naïve veracity, and a readiness to work himself into a passion, like a comedian, over borrowed ideas; an ultra license, and the faculty of comprehending the most delicate shades of all kinds of modesty, — we would never end, should we attempt to assemble all the contrasts of this astonishing character. The love of humanity, the hatred of oppression, the belief in the perfectibility of the human race, clearer and less fluctuating perhaps than in Voltaire, united him to the *patriarch of Ferney*: he was opposed to him in almost every other respect. Voltaire advocated *Reason* (practical and experimental reason); Diderot advocated *Nature*. Diderot was attached through tradition to a few unbelievers of the first half of the seventeenth century, — the Cyranos and the Theophiles. He sprung from these, like Voltaire from Chaulieu and Saint-Évremond; but over their heads he joined hands in a remoter past with something stronger, — with Rabelais and the first generation of the sixteenth century: he was related to Rabelais like Voltaire to Montaigne, but by a closer and more apparent bond.

Whither were we drifting, meanwhile, with guides such as Diderot and his friends? Like almost all innovators, these men, boiling over with life, were much better than their ideas. We behold a contrary and much sadder spectacle at the epochs when the idea of truth, vainly discerned anew by the mind, no longer produces the fruit of goodness in the dulled soul, and when the sentiment of man is below his thought. With the philosophers of the eighteenth century, the heart cast an illusion over their doctrines. But the men disappeared, the ideas remained: whither would they lead? Voltaire unsuccessfully strove to arrest the car launched on a

terrible descent: he had not the charmed words needed to stop the frenzied coursers. Diderot himself, who had shown in the *Dream of d'Alembert* and the *Supplement to the Voyage of Bougainville* how far he could go in point of unbounded licentiousness of imagination and materialistic logic, — Diderot was left behind! He defended moral love against Buffon; he defended the general ideas of justice and probity against Helvetius, to whom he had furnished his best pages; he denied that the pleasure of the senses is the only end of man; he refuted the morality of interest in behalf of sentiment.¹ Impotent efforts! What is the partial and abstract idea of justice separated from the universal and living ideal, which is justice as it is all kinds of perfection? What avails the reservation of sentiment, without liberty and immortality? Without free will there is no morality; without personality there is no immortality, no virtue, because there is no sacrifice.² By what right can it be demanded of a being who is to be annihilated to-morrow to sacrifice his gratification to the laws of a social order which has no final cause beyond this world?

Should no voice rise powerful enough to recall the human soul to itself, in vain would the confused enthusiasm of naturalism, in vain would the mysterious needs of our moral essence, attempt to delude themselves by giving form to the worship of *Reason and Nature*; in vain would they proceed even to strange revulsions towards the naturalistic theogonies of antiquity, and bring forth sects in which the material appetites would be shrouded in mystic forms. All this would pass away like a shadow: nought would remain standing. Passion, the fire of which could not subsist without the aliment of an ideal, would disappear after it; ideas would become effaced after sentiments; theoretic naturalism itself would sink under the disdain of all theory. Decrepit

¹ In private, at least; for the encyclopedists did not write publicly against each other. Diderot alike refutes the theory that *to feel is to judge*, of Helvetius. He lays down the distinction between the physical and the moral, "as solid," he says, "as that between the animal that feels and the animal that reasons." — See *Œuvres de Diderot*, t. III. p. 251; the admirable and inconsistent Letters to Falconet, and the *Mémoires sur Diderot*, by Naigeon. Voltaire, on the occasion of *L'Esprit*, had protested on his side, with great sense, in favor of free will, in the name of sentiment, — that principle to which Diderot appealed without being willing to draw the legitimate consequences therefrom, and which Voltaire was not accustomed to invoke.

² There are generous inconsistencies in this; but they do not authorize the denial of logic. Neither must the spiritualistic Pantheism of the Stoics or of Spinoza, according to which the *reasoning* soul, the soul of the sage, rejoins its source, the Supreme Being, be raised as an objection. Such a doctrine, weakening without destroying the notion of immortality, destroys nature, and not virtue.

society would then strive to return to its infancy. The impotence and apathy of souls would bring back, not the faith in the old traditional rites, but their form: we would have the ancient creeds on the surface, and absolute indifference, the last offspring of scepticism, at the bottom. Practical materialism would reign alone in the void over the ruined moral world. The abuse of the mind would have destroyed the mind.¹

¹ Nothing is more decisive concerning the impotence of the materialistic philosophy than the confessions which escaped Voltaire and Diderot. "Hell is good for the rabble, great and small," exclaimed Voltaire in one of his sallies. Diderot, in his *Projet d'instruction publique pour la Russie*, admits that Atheism, which is fitted for a small number of thinkers, could not suit a community. What is the logical conclusion of this, if not esotericism and official hypocrisy?

CHAPTER II.

THE PHILOSOPHERS. (CONTINUED.)

ROUSSEAU. — Spiritualism revived through Sentiment. Religious and Democratic Philosophy. Origin and Youth of Rousseau. *Dissertation on the Sciences. Dissertation on Inequality. Essay on the Origin of Languages. The New Héloïse. ÉMILE. THE SAVOYARD VICAR. SOCIAL CONTRACT. Letters from the Mountain.*

1749–1767.

ON the shore of the largest lake, at the foot of the highest mountains, of Europe, rises, surrounded with the most admirable spectacles of Nature, a city whose historic character since the Reformation has borne no proportion to the narrowness of its extent and the smallness of its population, — Geneva, that republican colony of French Protestantism, founded by the first emigration of the sixteenth century, under the auspices of an intolerant and harsh but energetic and persevering genius ; then enlarged and transformed by the second emigration of the seventeenth century, under the more humane influence of the spirit of investigation and the liberty of conscience. A great moral, intellectual, and material growth had coincided at Geneva with the decline of the old Calvinistic fanaticism. This city of twenty thousand souls already contained a multitude of men, no longer distinguished only as formerly in theology and preaching, but in letters, sciences, and the higher branches of trade. Among these men, the precursors of much more brilliant generations, it is sufficient to cite Abauzit of Languedoc, the true type of a religious philosopher and free-thinker, who preserved the genuine Christian spirit. Science and liberty at Geneva did not reject religious sentiment at the same time with fanaticism : Protestantism did not feel the need of passing through infidelity to end in philosophy.

June 28, 1712, a child was born at Geneva, of a clockmaker of French extraction, and the daughter of a minister of the gospel. The father was a skilful, cultivated, ardent, and intelligent artisan, but with little order in mind or conduct : the mother, a charming woman, of artistic tastes, refined mind, and tender heart, died in giving birth to the child. JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU was

born with irritable nerves and delicate organs, in which were lurking the germs of diseases destined to torture his physical life almost as much as his moral life. His precocious sensibility should have been restrained by the cultivation of practical reason: it was over-excited by an ill-directed education, which abandoned him defenceless to his imagination, and did not teach him to conquer dominion over himself. At six years of age, absorbed by the reading of romances, he had already acquired the habit of living in an imaginary world which he never completely quitted, and which was destined to make reality so harsh and repulsive to him, but also to contribute to preserve him from theoretical and practical materialism. "I had no idea of things themselves," he says, "while the whole round of sentiments was already known to me. I had apprehended nothing; I had felt every thing" (*Confessions*, liv. i.). With admirable natural sense, moreover, he never acquired, in intercourse with life, the feeling of the just relation of practical things, their positive and respective value.

History succeeded romances, — Plutarch, the Urfés, Scudéris, and La Calprenèdes. There was the same identification with the heroes of antiquity as with those of romance. In this strange child, these were not past events which belonged to the memory, but present facts which transpired in the soul. One day, as he was recounting at table the adventure of Scævola, the listeners were terrified at seeing him rise, and hold his hand over a burning chafing-dish to represent the act of his hero.

Two great currents coming, the one from the Middle Ages, through the romances of the seventeenth century, the other from Rome and Sparta, two idealities which seem opposite, but which may harmonize, to a certain degree, chivalric love and political virtue, blended, therefore, to form his soul. Voltaire had been the pupil of Bayle and Ninon: Rousseau was indirectly the pupil of Petrarch, and directly that of Lycurgus and Phocion. Other elements combined with these. The Genevese Protestant tradition, enlightened by free investigation and liberated from narrow sectarian spirit, confirmed, by religious sanction, the republican maxims of the great men of Plutarch, and kept the child in the surroundings the least remote from antique liberty which this age could offer. The love of the fields, of silence, and of solitude, another resemblance to the ancients, already announced that love of Nature, which would be in him, not a theory or a science, as in others, but the very source of inspiration, and the refuge of the soul.

But the equilibrium was already destroyed in this beautiful moral organization. The premature development of the sensibility had weakened the elasticity of the soul, as a too rapid growth weakens the body. The imagination was irresistibly powerful, the feeling profound, and the intellect extended and quick; but the will was weak, the character bent beneath the weight of the ideas and passions, and was to be strengthened one day only by a regeneration of the will, purchased at the price of mortal anguish.

Already in the childish love of this being, who was still ignorant of himself, was manifested that tenderness mingled with sensuality which was to be the torment of his whole existence. Ere long, adolescence brought him in contact with the first angles of harsh reality: the rival of Artamenes and Scævola was apprenticed to a vulgar trade. He soon became debased therein. His nature, yielding to every impression, readily suffered itself to be modified by the atmosphere which surrounded it. This idealistic, tender, and proud child contracted petty vices of dissimulation, false shame, and servile habits. The passion for reading, which remained to him from his better days, saved him from great vices and bad morals.

It is known how the apprenticeship terminated by a flight to Savoy, and how his escape threw him under the patronage of that singular woman who exercised so much influence over his destiny, — Madame de Warens. He changed his religion at Turin, already quite capable, at sixteen, of feeling the odiousness of apostasy, since he did not change through conviction, but because he was too feeble in will to escape by an energetic effort the false position in which he had thoughtlessly placed himself. He fell into domestic service. He seemed drifting to destruction. Every one knows the anecdote of the ribbon, — a childish freak, which ended, through the delirium of bashfulness, in a real crime, the remorse of his whole life, expiated by an heroic confession.

Providence sent him a helping hand which arrested him on the brink of the abyss, — that poor, dismissed curate, that Abbé Gaime, who planted the germs of religious philosophy by the side of the romantic and republican principles in his troubled, misled, but not perverted soul: the great man was one day to pay the debt of the child by immortalizing his benefactor. The Abbé Gaime was to become the *Savoyard Vicar*.

Returning from Turin to Savoy with a new heart, so to speak, he was led by his restless temper from Annecy to Lyons, to Switzerland, and to Paris, showing himself devoid of aptitude for regu-

lar and practised careers, and becoming successively infatuated with the most varied objects; a compound of an adventurer,¹ a projector, a child, and a dreamer, but the dreamer always prevailing. To wander, leaving free scope to his reveries, through a wild and picturesque country, was to him supreme happiness. Poverty scarcely troubled him: he forgot the hunger of yesterday, and did not think on that of the morrow. How many unknown poems gushed from his soul, and were wafted away beyond recall by the winds of the Alps with the clouds of heaven! what torrents of imagination and of passion, which suffer only a few distant echoes to reach us through the thickets of Clarens and the rocks of Meillerie!

It was on viewing the condition of the French peasant more closely in his vagrant peregrinations, and comparing it with the comfort of the Swiss,² that the first germ of hatred of the oppressors of the people, and of the unjust political and fiscal system that weighed upon France, entered his heart. The ideal love of antique liberty thus began to take root on earth. At the same time with pity for our peasants, an ardent sympathy was awakened in him for France, for the nation in general, — a sympathy which would always live in the depths of his soul, even when he treated us most harshly in his writings. Our literature was the foundation of what was a passion in him, and an ardent inclination throughout Europe, where the love of French literature counterbalanced the bad effect of the manners of the French: Europe hated the French when it saw them, and loved them when it read them. Jean-Jacques, for his part, would always love those whom he styled “the truest of all nations, altogether light and forgetful as it was,”³ and suffer more than themselves from their military reverses. He who was the most truly French at heart among our philosophers, he who would combat the dissolvent effects of the cosmopolitanism preached by his fellows, and rekindle the

¹ An adventurer who contracted no debts, and duped no one but himself, it must not be forgotten.

² See, in liv. iv. of the *Confessions*, the anecdote of the peasant in easy circumstances who affected destitution, concealing his wine on account of the excise-duties, his white bread on account of the villain-taxes, and deeming himself lost if it was suspected that he was not dying of hunger.

³ “I do not perceive any more virtues among the French than among other nations; but they have preserved a precious relic of their love. We must never despair of a people that still loves what is just and honest, although it no longer practises it. . . . It is still necessary to deceive them to render them unjust; a precaution of which I have not seen much need among other nations.” — *Correspondance*, 1770: Letter to M. de Bellol.

feeling of the country, the foster-father of that generation which was to save our nationality, was a foreigner by birth !

He had returned anew to Chambéry, where he led that strange existence, so well known, between Madame de Warens and Claude Anet. This woman, endowed with every virtue but that which is the essential characteristic of her sex, exercised an ascendancy over Rousseau which was advantageous to him in many respects, but which weakened his moral delicacy as regarded love, and clouded his ideal, without, however, succeeding in converting him to the deplorable system which she had inculcated on herself. This was the origin of many of the inconsistencies in the life of Rousseau.

Such a position could not satisfy him. His soul revolted against it, and preyed upon itself. He fell ill. His organization, greatly shaken, gave birth to those thoughts of a premature end which so long beset him, and turned his mind to religious ideas. Madame de Warens prevented him from succumbing to the terrors of Jansenism, which had seized him for a moment. She preached to him a Catholicism after her fashion, in which purgatory took the place of hell. He plunged into philosophy and the sciences, and wearied himself in vain in attempting to reconcile the modern metaphysicians ; then fell back upon his old friend Plutarch and upon Montaigne. Montaigne, so terrible to Pascal, was to Rousseau a well-beloved, if not always salutary, foster-father. Different souls can draw the most diverse oracles from this Proteus as varied as Nature herself.

We need not retrace the sudden changes, in the sequel of which, refusing to enter again into a position intolerable to his dignity and heart, but preserving a profound gratitude where love could not exist, he quitted Savoy irrevocably, and took for the second time the road to Paris in order to make a fortune in behalf of Madame de Warens. His means of making a fortune (he had already invented many !) was a method of noting music by figures. His decisive vocation was, he believed, that of musician (1741).

The method did not succeed ; but it procured him some acquaintances in the Parisian world. He attempted another adventure, and set out for Venice as secretary of the French ambassador. He acquitted himself in his diplomatic functions much better than would have been believed ; but the brutality of the ambassador, a great nobleman as vapid as incapable, suddenly closed the career to him. His return to Paris marks a fatal date in his life (1745), the epoch of his connection with Thérèse Levasseur, — an unhappy

union between the ideal and vulgar reality, which, by an inevitable reaction, absolutely separated the life of the soul and the imagination in Rousseau from the external life, instead of seeking to harmonize them. Poverty came to render heavier the deplorable yoke that he had taken upon himself. The contrast became more and more poignant between the man conscious of his own value and the position given him by society. Proud and timid, he ill understood how to succeed. His best years were vainly wasted; his attempted operas did not reach the stage; and, to avoid dying of hunger at thirty-five, he was forced to become the secretary of the wife and son of a farmer-general. From this time dated the so-much stigmatized faults which were to burden the rest of his career, and to leave a shadow on his name in the future. Two children, born of his intimacy with Thérèse, were sent to the Foundling Hospital (1747-1748). Poverty impelled him to this step: he was surrounded by the examples of a corrupt community: to people the *Enfants-Trouvés* appeared a very natural thing around him; and having nothing but sentiments and tendencies, without fixed principles, he was carried away by the spirit of imitation.

The time of faults was closely followed by that of glory. Rousseau had not thought, hitherto, of seeking subsistence or reputation in literature: he did not believe himself possessed of the necessary knowledge or facility, and attached no importance to a few verses, a few youthful attempts. Nevertheless, intimate with almost all the men of letters, he attached himself especially to Diderot with the vehemence that he threw into every thing, and undertook, at his request, the musical articles of the *Encyclopædia*. Meanwhile Diderot was imprisoned in the donjon of Vincennes, on account of his *Letter on the Blind*.

The decisive moment had come which was about to reveal Rousseau to himself and the world.

He went and came unceasingly between Vincennes and Paris, his brain heated by the persecution of his friend, which revived all his own sufferings. A smothered fermentation agitated him: his mind floated in a chaos full of germs and rays which demanded form and life. One day, as he was reading the literary journal, the *Mercur de France*, while walking along, his eyes fell on a prize question proposed by a provincial literary society,—the Academy of Dijon,—

Has the revival of the arts and sciences contributed to purify morals?

A flash of light illumined his brain : a whole world of ideas overflowed and assailed him with such impetuosity, that he fell at the foot of a tree in a kind of trance. He lived an age in half an hour. All his sympathies with Nature, with simple manners, with an independent and solitary life ; all his sufferings, all his grievances, all his vague irritation against a scholarly, elegant, fastidious, and depraved community, refined in mind and unfeeling at heart, which analyzed every thing without feeling any thing ; which disregarded the mysteries of the soul while attempting to reduce every thing to observation and experiment ; which, by force of giving decent names to its vices, had learned no longer to blush at them ; which stifled natural superiority under absurd and disgraceful conventional superiority ; which founded the enjoyment and knowledge of the few on the wretchedness and ignorance of the many ; against a community, in fine, perfected and flourishing without, but undermined within, like those trees, hollow to the core, which conceal their impending destruction beneath foliage and flowers,—all took form, all arranged itself in order : the inspiration gushed forth ; it was to gush forth uninterruptedly, like a fiery torrent, for twelve years.¹

¹ *Confessions*, l. viii. ; *Seconde Lettre à M. de Malesherbes ; Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques, second Dialogue*. A previous question must be decided here. A grave accusation has been brought against Rousseau. Morellet, Marmontel, La Harpe, and Madame de Vandeul, have repeated in every key, according to the assertion of Diderot, that Rousseau resolved the question in the negative only by the advice of Diderot, and contrary to his first impression. Were this fact true, the story of Jean-Jacques would be a romance, his theory a prolonged play of wit, and his life itself a calculated and dramatized paradox. There are examples of famous authors who have changed their initial argument through calculation of effect, through artistic choice, and have obtained a species of literary and conventional faith in their thesis : but these authors have painted only with their imagination, and have drawn every thing from their brain ; the man and the writer have been separate in them. In Rousseau, the man and the writer were absolutely identified ; he wrote, like Pascal, *with his heart's blood* ; and, as he said himself a hundred times, he was a writer only when the inspiration of his soul forced him to write : without inspiration, he wrote only like a common rhetorician, or rather he did not write, he could not write. It was absolutely the same in his private relations, his most familiar correspondence, as in his great works, and more than one proof anterior to his first writings attests the tendencies which led him to the point which he reached ; for instance, a letter of 1748 (*Histoire de Rousseau*, by Musset-Pathay, t. II. p. 363). Moreover, doubt is impossible to any one that has been touched in the slightest degree by the moral anguish which Rousseau expresses so powerfully : there is an accent therein which cannot be mistaken by the man who has passed through internal trials. Rhetoricians and sophists have not the secret of such language.

It is probable, that, if Rousseau preserved some scruples and hesitation, Diderot, with his natural love of paradox, did not fail to combat them, and to do his best to render the solution as excessive and absolute as possible. Rousseau admits that Diderot put a few touches to his first works, and exaggerated the coloring. The heedlessness

The Academy of Dijon had designed to propound the problem only with respect to the *revival* of the sciences in the modern era. Rousseau did not confine himself within these historic limits: it was the *establishment* itself of enlightenment among the human race which he considered, which he judged, and which he condemned.

"Our souls are corrupted in proportion as our arts and sciences advance towards perfection. This is a general law. Luxury, dissoluteness, and slavery have been in all times the punishment of our proud efforts to emerge from the blissful ignorance in which the Eternal Wisdom had placed us. Astronomy was born of superstition, eloquence, and ambition; . . . all the sciences, and morality itself, of human pride. The arts and sciences owe their birth, therefore, to our vices. The cultivation of the sciences enfeebles the martial qualities, and also the moral qualities. Printing, the cause of frightful and constantly increasing disorder in Europe, . . . is the art of rendering eternal the follies of the human mind."

The true meaning of these hyperboles soon breaks forth. "All these abuses proceed from the preference that is accorded to talent over virtue. A dangerous Pyrrhonism is substituted for ignorance. Our literary men go about sapping the foundations of faith and annihilating virtue. They smile at the old-fashioned words country and religion. The frenzy of distinguishing themselves is their only dogma. In our educational institutions, the youth are taught every thing except their duties. The word country never strikes their ear. The ancient politicians talked of morals and virtue: ours talk of nothing but commerce and money."¹

Then arises a cry of ill-restrained regret for those arts which he has just stigmatized. "The dissoluteness of morals, the con-

of Diderot and his ill humor towards Rousseau after their rupture misled his memory as to the circumstances: the malignity of his friends did the rest.

See, concerning this so often repeated discussion, two admirable, sagacious, and just pages in the excellent chapter that M. Villemain has devoted to Rousseau.—*Tableau du xviii. siècle*, t. II. xxiv. leçon.— See also, in this chapter, every thing concerning the formation of the talent of Rousseau.

¹ He regards as contributing to corruption, together with the sciences, "every thing which facilitates communication between different nations, and deteriorates the customs suited to their climate and political constitution. All change in customs tends to the prejudice of morals."—*Ibid.* This is the reaction against cosmopolitanism carried to extremes; but it is to be remarked that this is applicable only to a people at once free and primitive, and consequently cannot concern any of the great European States, all of which have lost their primitive form and manners.

sequence of luxury, is corrupting our taste. Woe to the artists who are born in these frivolous and effeminate times! Tell us, celebrated Arouet, how many virile and strong beauties you have sacrificed to our false delicacy?"

After a new digression against the infidel philosophers, he thus concludes: "The true philosophy is to commune with one's self, and to listen to the voice of his conscience in the silence of the passions."

To commune with one's self was the greatest saying that had been uttered during the century. Descartes had recalled the mind to itself: Rousseau recalled the soul thither.

Exaggeration and rhetoric at times marred the expression of an anger so sincere at heart; but the essential characteristic was none the less marked forever, — the rebellion of sentiment against the critical spirit, the reaction of conscience against the abuse of reason, the appeal to primitive simplicity against the refinement of manners. Rousseau had appeared in the arena.

The Dijon prize was won. "The *Dissertation* soars above the clouds," wrote Diderot, who forgave Rousseau his harsh truths for the sake of his paradoxes. Society followed Diderot's example: it applauded the blow that was dealt it; but the greater part believed themselves merely applauding a bold feat of strength. It was the sensation of cloyed souls who delight at times in being rudely awakened.

Several refutations were attempted meanwhile. Jean-Jacques replied to all, warming in the strife, and obstinately clinging to the most daring parts of his thesis, but at the same time manifesting his true aim with increasing energy.

"Science is not made for man in general. It is enough for him to study well his duties, and each one has received all the enlightenment that he needs for this study.

"Science is made," he had already said, "only for a few privileged geniuses, who should be placed at the head of society by the rulers.

"Man is made to think and to act, and not to reflect.

"We always think that we have said what the sciences have done when we have said what they should do. The study of the universe should exalt man to his Creator: it exalts nothing but human vanity." A fierce attack follows against ancient and modern philosophy, *the offspring of human pride*, which he seems to accuse in a body of atheistic esotericism. He softens this vehemence farther on by showing that *false* philosophers have suc-

ceeded *true* ones. "The first taught duty and virtue: the latter distinguish themselves only by marking out contrary paths."¹

It might have been imagined hitherto that a powerful auxiliary had come to the support of the established religion; but he attacks theology with the same weapons as philosophy.

"The scholastic substitutes scientific pride for Christian humility, and degrades the sublime simplicity of the gospel. The gospel is the only book necessary to a Christian, and the most useful of all even to him who is not such.

"It is true that the philosophy of the soul leads to true glory; but this is not learned in books.

"Rational ignorance . . . is that which renders us indifferent to every thing which does not contribute to render man better."

While admitting that ignorant nations may none the less be vicious, he greatly extols the primitive nations. "Through the obscurity of time, we discern among many of them very great virtues, especially a great abhorrence of debauchery, the fruitful mother of all other vices. Man and woman are made to love and to conjugate; but, beyond this legitimate union, all commerce of love between them is a frightful source of disorder in society and morals. Women alone can revive honor and probity among us; but they disdain from the hands of virtue an empire which they wish to owe only to their charms: therefore they do nothing but harm."²

This is the morality of Rousseau clearly defined. Its tone bears little resemblance to that of Voltaire.

The following is still more unlike the author of the *Worldling*:—

"Luxury may be necessary to give bread to the poor; but, if there were no luxury, there would be no poor. Every thing above physical necessities is a source of evil. To multiply one's wants is to place his soul in greater dependence."

After premises so rigorous, his conclusions, however, are by no means those of an enthusiast or a Utopian:—

¹ In his attacks on philosophy, he makes reservations in favor of an *illustrious philosopher*, in whom we recognize Montesquieu. He always preserved this inclination for the author of the *Spirit of Laws*, whose idea he had thoroughly fathomed, and whom he never regarded as an adversary. He was also conciliatory towards the historian of Nature, — Buffon.

² "This ascendancy of women is not an evil in itself," he had said in his *Discours*; "it is a gift bestowed on them by Nature for the happiness of the human race: better directed, it might produce as much good as it does harm at the present time. Men will always be whatever women please."

"Are we to reduce men to-day to simple necessities? No more than to burn the libraries. We should only plunge Europe anew into barbarism, and morals would gain nothing thereby. . . . In vain would you restore men to that first equality, the preserver of innocence and the source of all virtue: their hearts, once tainted, will be so forever. There is no longer a remedy, *unless through some great revolution, almost as much to be feared as the evil that it might cure, and which it is blamable to desire, and impossible to foresee.* Let us leave the arts and sciences, therefore, to soften, in some sort, the ferocity of the men whom they have corrupted."

We remark, lastly, in one of his replies, an axiom which he afterwards greatly elaborated:—

"*Man is naturally good.* Before those frightful words 'thine' and 'mine' were invented, before there were masters and slaves, before there were men abominable enough to dare to possess superfluities while other men were dying of hunger,—in what could have consisted those vices, those crimes, with which the human race is so noisily reproached?"¹

In 1753, the Academy of Dijon proposed a new question, much more searching than the first:—

What is the origin of inequality among men? Is it authorized by the law of Nature?

Rousseau buried himself for a week in the forest of Saint-Germain, meditating, reviving the past ages, and discovering by the power of his imagination the primitive forest in the royal park whose old oaks sheltered his reveries. He came forth armed with his second *Dissertation*.

He had first attacked the mind, intellectual progress: he was now about to attack wealth, material progress, social economy. He even opened the *Dissertation on Inequality* by something far more excessive, and seemed to condemn all society. He began by showing the primitive man, the savage, full of strength, address, and courage, living alone, his heart at peace and his body in health, without either vices or moral virtues, since he was acquainted neither with duty nor justice, but having as his *natural virtue* that innate pity towards his fellows which is remarked even among animals, and which was much more imperious in the

¹ *Réponse à M. Bordes.*—See also *Lettre à M. l'abbé Rainal; Lettre à M. Grimm; Réponse au roi de Pologne; Lettre sur une nouvelle réfutation, etc.; Préface de la comédie de Narcisse*, 1751-1753.

state of nature than the *state of reason*.¹ Love itself scarcely troubled his peace, happy as he was "in being ignorant of the ravages of the imagination, and the preferences which constitute the moral part of love, — a *factitious* sentiment born of the usages of society."

He repeats on this subject, with passionate bitterness, the strange principles geometrically laid down by the calm Buffon.

"In short, the savage state was the immobility of the species, without either education or progress; that is to say, the animal state. Animal life," he had said before in his letter to M. Bordes, "is not the worst condition for man: it is better to resemble a sheep than a fallen angel."

Man, however, even in the animal state, was distinguished from the animals by two specific qualities, — free activity,² and perfectibility. "It would be deplorable for us to be forced to admit that this almost unlimited faculty is the source of all the misfortunes of man. If Nature has designed us to be healthy, I almost dare affirm that the state of reflection is an unnatural state, and that the man who meditates is a depraved animal. The first man that made himself clothing or a lodging thus gave himself unnecessary things, since he had hitherto dispensed with them. In becoming social and a slave, man became weak, wicked, timorous, and cringing."

Setting out from the idea that intercourse between men was not *necessary*, and that perfectibility needed, in order to develop itself, the fortuitous coöperation of several foreign causes which could never have arisen, he judges the problem of the origin of languages insoluble.

"Having proved that inequality was scarcely perceptible in the state of nature, it remains for me to show its origin and progress in the successive development of the human mind. It remains for me to consider the different chances which may have improved the human reason while deteriorating the species,

¹ In his preface, he founds natural right on two principles anterior to reason, — self-love, and sympathy for one's fellows. Natural right extends in a certain measure to animals, as pertaining in some sort to our nature through the sensibility with which they are endowed.

² The man that lived the animal life could only virtually possess this liberty, and could not have the reflective consciousness of it: he would have, in point of fact, only spontaneity, and not moral liberty; having no general ideas to which to refer his actions.

and, from so remote a limit, brought man and the world at length to the point where we now see them."

This conjectural history of civilization and inequality is the subject of the second part of the *Dissertation*.

"The first man, that, having enclosed a piece of ground, took it into his head to say, '*This is mine*,' and found men simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society. How many crimes and how much wretchedness would have been spared the human race, had some one, picking up his spade and filling in the ditch, exclaimed to his fellows, 'Beware of listening to this impostor: you are lost if you forget that the earth belongs to no one, and its fruits to all!'"¹

This celebrated saying against property has many times been echoed in the formidable conflicts in which the fundamental principles of human association have been disputed in our days. It suffices to remark here that the spirit which dictated it, being a retrospective regret for savage independence, has nothing in common with the theories which attack property in the point of view of an organized community.

Rousseau, at the moment when this was written, acknowledges that it had probably become impossible for things to continue as they were; his idea of property, the farthest limit of the state of nature, depending much on the prior ideas and progress.

He next passes this progress in review, and describes the transition from the savage state to the state of barbarous peoples; the formation of the family, then of the tribe; love, jealousy, self-love, or the idea of consideration and distinction, with its consequences, civility and the point of honor, transforming men elevated to the moral sense by the multiplicity of their relations. He begins to correct in some degree the excess of his thesis: it is no longer animal life, but tribe life, the life of the hunters and the shepherds, that is the true youth of the world, the happiest and most lasting epoch, despite the cruelties and acts of revenge with which it was stained, and which had already weakened man's sympathy for his fellow, the *natural virtue* of the savage. He now approves of the first arts and manufactures, those which only de-

¹ Compare, with Pascal, Havet edit. 1852, pp. liii, 94; Boileau, *Satire* xi., lines 143-173; Fénelon, Utopia of Bœotia, *Télémaque*, liv. vii.; Diderot against the *meum* and *tuum*, *Encyclopédie*, art. *Bacchionites*; Cervantes, *Don Quixote*; Address of Don Quixote to the goatherds, Viardot translation; *Id.* of M. Furne, 1858. Cervantes opens the attack.

manded the hand of a single man or a single family. "Men then lived free, healthy, good, and happy, as far as it was possible to be by their nature." Evil commenced as soon as one man made other men labor for him, charging himself with their support. "Equality disappeared; property was introduced; slavery and wretchedness germinated and grew with the harvests. Metallurgy and agriculture were the two arts, the invention of which produced this great revolution. . . . Iron and grain civilized men and destroyed the human race."

Cultivation brought about the partition of lands: manual labor gave birth to property; property, in its turn, produced the first laws. The inequality increased, but also the reaction of the poor against the usurpation of the rich: the right of the strongest unceasingly disputed the soil with the right of the first occupant. The rich, for their interest, and under the pretext of the interest of all, proposed and procured the acceptance of the establishment of regulations for justice and peace. "Such was or must naturally have been the origin of society and laws, which irrevocably destroyed *natural liberty* (that is, independence), and forever established the law of property and inequality."

The law of Nature had ceased to exist except among the different communities into which the human race was divided, and which contended with each other as individuals had formerly done.

From the primitive laws, he passes to the formation of governments charged with maintaining these laws. He denies, like Montesquieu, that society commenced with absolute government, and that this government, and society itself, derived their origin from paternal authority; the adult son being naturally his father's equal, and owing him only respect, and not obedience. Arbitrary power is not the beginning, but the corruption, the extreme term, of governments: moreover, the date here is unimportant. Arbitrary power, being by its nature *unlawful*, could not in any event have served as the foundation of the *rights of society*, or, consequently, have served to render stable and lawful instituted inequality.

We see, that, while regretting the establishment of the social order, he does not deny its lawfulness, once established. It is important to verify this.

If arbitrary power is unlawful, by much greater reason is slavery. "(Personal) liberty is a gift which we hold from nature in the quality of men. Parents have no right to alienate that of their children to a despot, a master. The jurisconsults who have

gravely decreed that the child of a slave is born a slave, have decided, in other terms, that the man is not born a man."

Of the different forms of government, democracy is the best, because it is the least remote from nature. All the magistrates in the different governments were at first elective; then the dissensions caused by the elections induced the people to permit the leaders to become hereditary; then the hereditary leaders transformed their office into a family estate, — a piece of property. Inequality, therefore, has three principal degrees: first, the establishment of law and of legal property; secondly, the institution of the magistracy; thirdly, the transformation of lawful into arbitrary power, supported by standing and mercenary armies. "At this last term of inequality, the circle closes anew. Equality is found again in nothingness. The notions of goodness and justice again vanish. Men return to the law of the strongest, and to a new state of nature, which is the fruit of an excess of corruption. Force maintains the despot; force overthrows him, . . . until new revolutions wholly dissolve the government, or bring it nearer the lawful institution."

After political inequalities, he analyzes civil inequalities, and concludes that wealth is the final distinction among men, "to which all the rest are reduced in the end, — an observation by which we may judge in what proportion each nation has departed from its primitive institution, and of the progress which it has made towards the farthest limit of corruption."

In short, "an immense space separates the natural state from the civil state. The soul and the human passions deteriorate insensibly during this prolonged transformation. The original man vanishing by degrees, society no longer presents any thing but an assemblage of artificial men and factitious passions, which are the work of all these new relations, and which have no real foundation in nature. The savage man lives in himself: the civilized man only knows how to live in the opinion of others."

As in the *Dissertation against the Sciences*, he is less absolute, however, than might be expected in his conclusions. He appears tacitly to admit that civil law is not always and necessarily opposed to natural law. He admits that distributive justice demands that citizens should be distinguished in proportion to their services. Social inequality is contrary, according to him, to natural law, when it does not concur, in the same proportion, with natural inequality. "It is manifestly contrary to the law of

nature for a child to command an old man, for an imbecile to direct a sage, and for a handful of men to gorge themselves with superfluities while the famished multitude are lacking the necessities of life."

So excessive in the beginning, he seems, therefore, reduced finally to the condemnation of hereditary functions and distinctions in the political order, and excessive inequality of fortune in the civil order.

It is necessary to make a distinction in Rousseau between the inspiring sentiment and the positive theme, which is the same in both *Dissertations* under two different aspects; but this is not enough. This theme, so paradoxical, and so offensive not only to our pride, but to our most legitimate aspirations, so harshly negative to that great dogma of progress which is the very foundation of the modern spirit, should not, however, be treated lightly. In the decline of societies, there exists an inevitable tendency in genius to go back to the sources of life, to cling, like Antæus of fable, to the breast of the foster-mother, Earth, to Mother Nature, in order to revive its exhausted strength by contact with her. The great Latin historian urged the *manners of the Germans*, the barbarians, as an example to corrupt Rome: the Greek and Roman philosophers and poets went back still farther, to the Golden Age, the state of innocence. The anathemas against civilization claim a still remoter and more mysterious origin. In the symbols of the creation, the first fall and the first progress are made identical. Man loses his innocence and happiness by tasting the fruit of the tree of knowledge, and neglecting that of the tree of life. By a contrast pointed out by Rousseau,¹ while the Greeks deified the inventor of agriculture, and the inspired singer who built cities by harmony, Moses, rescuing his people from the midst of learned Egypt, showed, in the shepherd Abel, the well-beloved of the Lord, and in the accursed Cain, at once the first homicide, the first agriculturist, and the first founder of cities.²

Man, vibrating from one reaction to another, had never hitherto simultaneously embraced the opposite phases of universal truth. Rousseau followed the common law. He protested against all progress, because intellectual progress, separated from moral progress,³ forgetting its starting-point and the immutable bases

¹ In another book, the *Essai sur l'origine des Langues*.

² Zoroaster, on the contrary, represents the art of sowing corn and wheat in well-tilled ground as the purest act of the law of God. — *Vendidad*, fargard III. Djemchid, the tiller of the soil, is blessed of Ormuz. — *Ibid.* fargard II.

³ There is some reservation to be made here. The moral progress had not kept pace

of things, had come to the point of disregarding the end of its own existence; because man, in fine, had separated from Nature and God.

It was a prophetic warning, a cry of anguish of soul, which could not be transformed into a rational thesis without coming into collision with impossibilities. To condemn all progress in a perfectible being was to wish that the Creator had made a useless work: it was necessarily to go back beyond the tribe state, to which Rousseau was drawn by his imagination, and which was already the result of an infinite progress, to a primitive and absolute state. Rousseau pushed on, therefore, resolutely to animality; but there his reason showed him the essential differences between man and animals, which made it impossible for this state to endure, or for it *ever perhaps to have existed*, as he acknowledges in his preface. What he did not see was that the human animal, had it existed, must have been the most wretched of creatures, precisely because it was the only one perfectible. Nature herself, by not clothing man, and by rendering him weaker, less agile, and less strongly armed, than the larger beasts of prey, providentially forced him to quit Nature, and to develop his slumbering faculties. The savage hunter, as he is known to us, already far removed from this primitive condition, still leads a very precarious life; and Rousseau formed strange illusions, shared also by many of his contemporaries, concerning the prodigious population of the savages and barbarians, — a population, on the contrary, infinitely less than that of civilized communities, for the simple reason that the means of subsistence among them are much more difficult and insecure.

It would be useless to dwell on the historic errors, or the abuses of logic, which Rousseau singularly corrected or lessened in his subsequent works, had not the war which he waged against civilization, science, literature, and the refinements of the mind and manners, interpreted by violent and gross natures and perverted intellects, afterwards furnished pretexts for barbarism, ready to grow out of the very excess of civilization and inequality. Writers did not yet know (and this is an excuse for many rash sayings) what power and responsibility was borne by speech, and that the time was approaching when all words would be transformed into acts. Who knows whether such a proposition concerning the useless-

with the progress of knowledge; society had receded morally in certain respects, but it had advanced in others; the growth of the sentiment of humanity was an incontestable boon of philosophy.

ness of the sciences may not have served as an argument or excuse for the judges of Lavoisier ?

The same is true with respect to the condemnation of the *meum* and *tuum*, which is in him only a vain regret for a retrospective Utopia. *Mine* is the consequence of *I*: property logically proceeds from personality. Moral evil was born with property and society ; nothing is more evident. There would be no moral evil if man had neither intercourse with others, nor knowledge of himself, and if, consequently, there was no morality in human actions : evil was born with good. As soon as a man had tamed or captured an animal, another man could not take his conquest from him without injustice, and the right of property was realized, — a right which must not be confounded with legal or recognized property, as Rousseau says. Rousseau does not make the distinctions here, which should be made, either between the right or the law which is derived from the nature of things and conventional law, or between the right of property in general and of landed property ; a separate application of the principle of property, which has commonly been made only by social institution. Personal property was prior to society, and contemporary with humanity itself. Landed property, the basis of our existing Western communities, had its origin in the historic ages. Rousseau says, "*The earth belongs to no one.*" It should be said, the earth belongs to the human race. From the earliest ages of history, the tribes, the nations, had begun to apportion this common domain. Many centuries after, the domains of the nations most advanced in civilization were apportioned in turn among individuals. The appropriation of the soil does not constitute an absolute and unconditional right. The first condition is cultivation : a nomadic nation, which does not cultivate it, acquires no real right to the earth. The second condition, applicable to nations established on the soil, is the acknowledgment, in some sort, of the supremacy of the human race by respect for the laws of humanity and the rights of nations. They owe to strangers free transit, free residence, and free exchange, save the reservations exacted for the security of the State. As the nation that occupies a region of the earth has duties towards the human race, so individuals, landholders, have duties towards the nation and towards the non-landholders. They owe to the nation, the guarantee of their estates, a part of their revenue ; and to their fellow-citizens who are not landholders means of labor and sub-

sistence, which will indirectly restore to these disinherited ones a part of the common heritage.

This is not the place to touch upon another question raised by Rousseau, — that of the origin of the social compact: its solution was not serious, and he was soon to resume the problem with more calmness and profundity.

There is also a reservation to be made with respect to Rousseau's attacks on the philosophers, his contemporaries.¹ While justly assailing their doctrines, not only is he unjust to their character and intentions, but he sees in them a cause where they are only an effect. Sceptical or materialistic philosophy was the offspring, and not the parent, of licentious selfishness and infidelity, themselves the offspring of bigotry and hypocrisy.

Rousseau may be reproached with exaggeration of language, as of ideas. His style, so full and strong, resonant with a virile harmony which gave a hitherto unknown measure and rhythm to French prose, and the accent of which reminds us of what is related of the Doric mode of his beloved Spartans, — this style, unrivalled, but not always equal to itself, is sometimes studied to stiffness, vehement to declamation, or marred with grandiloquence by the abuse of the apostrophe and the interjection. The somewhat tardy admission into that Parisian society, which was the only and necessary school of good taste; the natural difficulty which he had in writing, for, the opposite of Voltaire in every thing, he experienced great trouble in expressing his superabundant thought; the desire to strike forcibly at any price, after the fashion of the preachers, in order to move the hard heads and enervated souls of his contemporaries; lastly, and above all, perhaps, the influence and example of Diderot, must have been very diverse causes which too often caused him to do violence to his style, and at the same time to exceed his true sentiment. We thus perceive how the most passionate at heart and the most sincerely inspired among the writers of the eighteenth century may have contributed, with Diderot, to bring forth the habits of declamatory rhetoric, dramatic effect, and calculated passion, which were not long in making their way into French literature, and in parodying, so to speak, the new and admirable expression which Rousseau himself had given to all the strong and deep sentiments of our soul. Many of the charming qualities of the French spirit, which were

¹ And to his historical errors to the prejudice of the ancient philosophers.

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summed up in Voltaire, were wanting in Jean-Jacques; but they were compensated for by other qualities of a superior order: the defects contrary to our national genius, almost imperceptible or gloriously redeemed in the master, overflowed in the pupils.¹

These defects, a thing still more serious, were destined, after literature, to invade the real life, the political life, which was about to dawn on France. Their consequences were seen in the Revolution. When exaltation and enthusiasm become accepted and habitual forms, there comes a moment when neither the auditors, nor the political actors themselves, longer know how to distinguish real feeling from conventional hyperbole, or to return to the one while freeing themselves from the other. It is then with civic virtue as formerly with chivalric love. The chill of doubt seizes our hearts; we stagger on the gigantic pedestal upon which we have imprudently elevated ourselves: the critical spirit, lifting its mocking head, calls to us from the depths of the abyss, and we fall back with a terrible rebound into the arms of scepticism and annihilation.

We criticise the traces and echoes of Rousseau thus rigorously, only on account of the immense scope of his words: it will speedily, moreover, be our task to show how far the balance of good and evil was in his favor, in the judgment to be pronounced upon his influence. No sooner had he opened his lips, than, less by his formal propositions than his tone, he restored earnestness to the world, and recalled man, distracted by external things, to himself. Neither the witticisms of the free-thinkers, nor maxims of vague benevolence and indifferent tolerance for vice and virtue, were longer in question here. The *know thyself* of Socrates and Descartes resounded anew. To *discover man*, this second Diogenes, inspired with a purer ideality than the first, would search to the lowest depths, and overthrow mountains.

The *Dissertation on Inequality*, which was not published until 1755, did not have the same renown as its predecessor. The noise, the successful scandal, had been made on the occasion of the *Dissertation against the Sciences*. The astonishment dissipated, it was now necessary to meditate, to judge profoundly: this was too much for the public. The Academy of Dijon was terrified at its own audacity, and dared not crown the author the second time: the government, however, paid little heed to the boldness of Rousseau, who had printed his book in Holland, and was satis-

¹ Not among all: great writers have maintained the noble tradition of Rousseau, from Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and Madame de Staël to our days.

fied with a few reservations concerning the authority of the creation and the divine sanction granted to the ruling powers. The philosophers, less harshly treated than in the first *Dissertation*, were divided. Diderot applauded. Voltaire stood on the reserve, but was dismayed and irritated. He had greeted the attack on the sciences, as an original paradox, by an inoffensive pleasantry (*Timon*); but this time he was obliged to take in earnest this systematic warfare on the refinement of manners, the progress of comfort, and every thing that constituted the charm of life to him. He conceived an aversion to this eloquent barbarian. He was not fitted to judge such things equitably: he very clearly discerned the exaggerations and errors on the surface, and did not take the trouble to scan to the bottom.¹ The opposition between them was thenceforth decided.

Rousseau became more and more defined. From the publication of his first writing, he had resolved to offer the best proof of his sincerity, and to support his speech by his example. He had lived hitherto according to unregulated feeling: he wished thenceforth to live according to virtue, and in the greatest simplicity comporting with the social state.

He examined into his duties. He considered his union with Thérèse as a genuine marriage; but, alas! from the first step in this new path, reason misled him as much as unreflecting imitation had done before. What was he to do with the children born to him? He was poor, and forced to labor: he believed himself threatened with a premature death. He could not bring them up himself; his wife was incapable of it, and her mother unworthy: she would make them adventurers or beggars. It was better for the State to adopt them, and make them mechanics or peasants. He continued, therefore, to send them to the Foundling Hospital, and diverted his thoughts by persuading himself that he was acting like "a member of the Republic of Plato."

Repentance came, as is attested by many touching passages of the *Correspondance* and *Émile*; and the heart, listened to too late, refuted the sophisms of the mind.² Rousseau proved by his very

¹ In a reply to Charles Bonnet, who had attacked him under the name of *Philopolis*, Rousseau, however, had just made a great concession. He had acknowledged that "the state of society springs from the nature of the human race, with the aid of external circumstances which may or may not exist, or, at least, *happen sooner or later*. . . . The state of society having an extreme limit to which men have the power of arriving sooner or later, it is not useless to show them the danger of going so fast."

² He had three more children, from 1750 to 1755: then he resolved no longer to expose himself to the repetition of these sad abandonments.

falls the legitimacy of the reaction which he preached, in the name of feeling, against the abuse of reason.

He might, however, have risen from this poverty, which reduced him to such deplorable extremities. A receiver-general wished to take him as cashier. He undertook it, became perplexed, and fell ill. His natural disposition was as antipathetic to regular cares, to material obligations, and to business, as his principles were incompatible with the avocation of *publican* under the fiscal tyranny which oppressed France. He resigned his office, with every chance of fortune. Neither was he willing to earn a livelihood with his pen; writing was to him a priesthood, and not a trade; to write in order to live would have stifled the independence of his genius: to be himself, and to be useful, he needed to free himself from all interested motives, from all necessity of pleasing, and not to be dependent on success. He became a copyist of music in order to live without depending on any one but the public. It was at this time that he abandoned the sword, gold lace, and superfluities which the world imposed even on the indigence of the artist and the writer, and adopted the simple costume in which he is represented by Delatour. The great portrait-painter of the eighteenth century painted Voltaire and Rousseau in turn at nearly the same age, — about forty. A more touching contrast can scarcely be beheld than these two faces, both admirable, — the one full of external radiance, sparkling animation, and charming and mocking grace; the other of contemplative beauty, melancholy sweetness, and internal fire.

Another graver act attests the conscientiousness which Rousseau designed to introduce into his life. He went to Geneva to abjure, at a mature age, the Roman religion which he had embraced almost in childhood, and resumed the creed of his country (1754). We shall soon see how he intended to reconcile philosophy with what he regarded as the foundation of Christianity.

Rousseau had just won a kind of success that contrasted with his reformation and his new austerity, carried to an affected rudeness, which was nothing but timidity and self-distrust. Become the fashion by his very rupture with the world, he almost brutally repulsed the advances of society in order to avoid again becoming its slave. One of his operas, however, was at length represented, first at court, then in the city (1752-1753). The simple and graceful melodies of the *Devin de Village* were greatly relished at court. This was the occasion for a new sacrifice. Partly through timidity, partly through principle, he excused himself

from being presented to the King: he did not refuse the presents (a kind of copyright) usually received by the authors of works represented before the court; but he refused a pension that might fetter his independence.

This was at the beginning of that warfare between French and Italian music which had been raised up by the arrival of the *Bouffes* (Italian theatre) at Paris, and which was to last till the approach of a more formidable conflict, — the eve of the Revolution. The concessions of Rameau to the ultramontane methods had not sufficed; and this master, moreover, was in no wise Italian in genius. Rousseau took sides with words as trenchant and as absolute as those of the *Dissertation against the Sciences*, in his *Letter on French Music* (1753): he claimed that France could have no music, music being nothing but melody, melody depending on the character of the language, and the French language being incompatible with all melody. Our old popular airs, Lulli and his school, and the *Devin* itself indeed, offered contradictions to this thesis, which aroused as much scandal and much more anger than the thesis against society. More glorious contradictions would soon appear. Grétri and Gluck were not far distant.

The paradox of Rousseau was only the questionable application of an ingenious and profound idea: from these discussions, therefore, proceeded a most admirable book, which greatly exceeded the scope of the quarrel, somewhat ill defined in itself, perhaps, by Jean-Jacques,¹ and which formed the link between his musical works and his philosophy, — the *Essay on the Origin of Language and the Source of Melody*.

This double title announced the essential identity of speech and melody in the mind of Jean-Jacques. The fundamental idea of the book went still farther: it was the primitive unity of speech, poetry, music, and the plastic art.

This book also announced the modifications that had been wrought in the mind of Jean-Jacques since he attempted to resolve a problem which he had lately deemed insoluble. Going back for the second time to the cradle of humanity, but with a less irritated and less prejudiced spirit, Jean-Jacques shows man, as soon as he had recognized in other men beings that thought and felt like himself, seized with the desire or the necessity of communicating his thoughts and feelings to them. Man first in-

¹ The point in question, in fact, was a discussion between the music of expression, dramatic declamation, and the music of the imagination and free fancy.

vented representative signs, gestures which depicted objects. The language of gesture might have sufficed us had we possessed none but physical wants. It was neither hunger nor thirst, but love, hatred, pity, and anger, that drew the first sounds of the voice from men. The first languages, those of the East, were in no wise methodical or logical: vivid and figurative (figurative sense was born before literal sense), tuneful and passionate, they united all the arts, all the expressions of life, in their principle, the plastic art in gesture, music in speech, poetry in both and in every thing. The first languages were not arbitrary. "The greater part of the radicals therein must have been imitative sounds, either the expression of the passions, or the effect of sensible objects. The words thus had an intrinsic value. The sounds, accent, and measure, which came from nature, were very varied, and left little to be done by the articulations (consonants), which were conventional: men chanted then instead of speaking.

"In proportion as wants increased, as affairs became complicated, and as enlightenment extended, language changed character; it became more precise and less passionate; it substituted ideas for feelings; it spoke no longer to the heart, but to the reason. Through the same cause, accent died out; articulation extended; language became more exact and clearer, but more deliberate, duller, and colder."

The art of writing was the farthest limit of this transformation. "Writing, which seemed destined to give stability to language, was precisely what perverted it; it did not change the words, but the genius; it substituted exactness for expression: we render our feelings when we speak, and our ideas when we write."¹

There were, therefore, three periods in the formation of language: first, chanted and gestured language; secondly, spoken language; thirdly, written language.

"No language, in which several musical airs may be set to the same words, has a determined musical accent. The languages of modern Europe are all more or less included in this category,

¹ "The discovery of the art of communicating our ideas depends upon a faculty peculiar to man. The animals have, in some sort, a natural language, not acquired and unvarying. Conventional language belongs alone to man. This is why man makes progress both in good and evil, while animals make none." — Compare with the *Grammaire* of Condillac and with Buffon.

² "The climates of the North," he says farther on, "brought forth the second kind of language, — that which arises from needs: the first word of this was no longer *love* me, but *aid* me. Our languages are more valuable written than spoken: with the languages of the East it is the contrary."

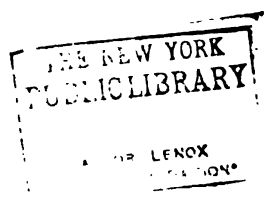
even the Italian. The Italian language is not a musical language in itself any more than the French: the only difference is that the one lends itself to music, and that the other does not do so."

If music is simply the modulation of human speech, it is clear that Rousseau is right. But the question is to know whether music can be a language distinct from speech, sufficient unto itself in the undetermined soaring of the soul towards nature, the ideal, the infinite (symphony), or completing and explaining itself by the indications of gesture and speech in the expression of determined sentiments (dramatic music). The great creations of the musical art reply affirmatively. The arts, including that of speech, could only develop themselves by breaking through the primitive unity of life, — a condition of our weak and imperfect nature, incapable of developing any thing except through decomposition! What an admirable power, however, is that of the writer, who, from the bosom of the obsolete systems of society, thus evokes the spring-time of humanity, and, by a faculty unknown to his age and the preceding one, discovers the most remote sources of the past in the eternal foundation of man! We behold with him the first families vegetating in a purely physical existence in those luxuriant lands of Upper Asia where man can dispense with his fellow; then necessity drawing together the scattered groups in the torrid and arid regions; moral love, poetry, and the languages born of the meeting at the well of the desert simultaneously with the tribe, with society; the full-grown man, finally, taking possession with intoxication of himself and of Nature in that pastoral life in which universal tradition, transmitted from echo to echo to the romances and pictures which travesty it so strangely, has always placed the Golden Age.

It is here that Rousseau fixes his ideal: he continues to anathematize large cities and complicated systems of society; but he no longer regrets, as in the *Dissertation on Inequality*, that we did not stop at the language of gesture, or condemns reflection, which he admits necessary, even to develop the primitive sentiment of sympathy for our fellows.

The part of the book specially upon music contains considerations of the most elevated æsthetics: he triumphantly refutes the materialism which sees in the effects of the fine arts only the physical excitement of our organs. "Sensible objects derive their principal power from the affections of the soul which they represent to us."

The *Essay on the Origin of Language* claims an important





THE COTTAGE OF J. J. ROUSSEAU
in Montmorency.

Painted for HILLMAN & CO. by the same artist as above.

place in the history of Rousseau's mind. This admirable work, with the article *Political Economy* written in 1755 for the *Encyclopædia*, marked the transition from the two *Dissertations to Émile* and the *Social Contract*. The genius of Rousseau lost its frenzy without losing any thing of its strength or fire. He became temperate and settled in his work. Rousseau did not give to the term *political economy* the special meaning assigned to it by others even at that moment. His article was a treatise on politics, which was to be elaborated and completed in a more decisive work to which we shall speedily recur. We will only remark that the traces of the savage Utopia disappeared in the presence of *practical* and positive questions, and that law and property were fully accepted therein.

At the same time, Rousseau gave a new and definitive sanction to his personal reformation by quitting that Parisian society, away from which it seemed impossible to live as soon as one had tasted its feverish delights. Various motives had decided him,—the extreme difficulty in remaining faithful to his principles in the midst of Paris; his want of success, personally, in society (charming in intimacy, eloquent in monologue and elevated discussion, he was absolutely lacking in the quickness, readiness, and brilliant sallies which gave sovereignty in the drawing-rooms); and lastly, and above all, his profound love of the fields and of Nature. He thought for a moment of returning to his country, but renounced it, partly because he believed himself freer to write in a foreign land than within the reach of the Genevese patricians; partly because he saw Voltaire settle at that moment at Geneva, and foresaw his powerlessness to prevent him from introducing there the manners of Paris. A friend, Madame d'Épinai, offered him a retreat a few leagues from Paris, in a park adjoining the forest of Montmorency (April, 1765). This was that *Hermitage* where he had counted on finding peace, and which was rendered illustrious by the storms of his heart.

The vast labors into which he had plunged, the great philosophical and political works simultaneously pursued, did not suffice to absorb his soul. A new moral modification was wrought within him. The intoxication of virtue, kindled in his brain, had passed into his heart; and he would never contradict himself as to simplicity of manners, and contempt for worldly vanities: but the rude stoicism which he had imposed upon himself was too contrary to his ardent and tender nature; he had still too much youth to endure this effort to the end. The life of Paris had

strengthened by irritating him : the life of the fields softened him. He then felt the deep void in a heart which the weak Thérèse could not fill. The power of passion, the exquisite faculties of sentiment which he had received from Nature, turned against him to prove his torment. He bewailed his fate, unable to console himself for not having loved truly a single time, for growing old without having been young, and for dying without having lived.

The *New Héloïse* proceeded from this crisis of tenderness, as the two *Dissertations* had proceeded from the crisis of heroism through which he had passed seven years before. His works were never any thing else than the outbreak of his inner life. To divert his grief, he had called his imagination to his aid, and surrounded himself with ideal creations which he did not dream at first of embodying on earth. By degrees, these sweet shadows took form and life. He seized his pen, and wrote, almost without a plan, the first two parts of his novel ; then the shame of contradicting his severe maxims made him seek a moral end. From this came the last parts, or the reign of duty after the reign of passion. It will be comprehended that a work thus composed would not have the unity of conception and execution, the scholarly and logical elaboration, and the irreproachable arrangement of plot, of a *Clarissa*, any more than the variety and propriety of the characters ; that it would not be, like the plebeian epic of Richardson, the universal mirror of society : such a work is the mirror only of its author. An actor who should be carried away by his emotion, instead of ruling it, and should wholly identify himself with a single passion and a single character, would not be an actor, but simply a personage ; though this personage might indeed be sublime. Such is Rousseau, especially in the first parts. Incapable of the dramatic qualities which cause one to identify himself successively with all the varieties of human nature, he is unequalled in this long colloquy with himself. Despite some alloy of the defects with which he has been reproached, a multitude of the letters of his *Julie* are masterpieces of eloquence, passion, and profundity ;¹ and the last parts are signalized by a moral purity, a wisdom of views, and a religious elevation, altogether new in the France of the eighteenth century.

However beautiful is the greater part of the book, as a whole,

¹ The letters of *Saint-Preux* on the morals and the women of Paris, altogether episcodical, may be considered as the complement, but a superior complement, of Duclos' *Considérations sur les Mœurs*. Rousseau shows himself therein, not a morose censor, but an observer as equitable as penetrating.

in its plot, it is objectionable. Rousseau has not succeeded in connecting the two parts of his work together. Nevertheless, the character of Wolmar, on which the plot hinges, and which feeling and reason alike reject, presents a great interest apart from the action of the book. Rousseau, who lately attacked the infidel philosophers with so much bitterness, appeals here to tolerance and conciliation, when he depicts, face to face with the religious philosophers, the sceptical or even atheistic honest man, by a happy inconsistency rescuing practical morality from the wreck of the ideal. The conclusion is, *Bear ye with one another*. It was accepted by none, and he himself was not faithful enough to it.

Unhappily for Rousseau, he could not shut himself up within the imaginary world that he had created. In the midst of his dreams, "intoxicated with love without an object," a real object appeared to him, and became the aim of his vague transports. He was not deceived in his choice. Madame d'Houdetot showed herself, in all that we know of her, the sincerest, the best, and the most honorable among the women of the world in which she lived. He became acquainted with or appreciated her too late: she was engaged; and such natures engage themselves but once, and for life. It was because she was worthy of him that she could not be his. Rousseau was never to know love returned. He tore himself from the grasp of this ardent and painful passion with a heart rent and a body shattered by the reaction of the soul. Incidents brought about by his love filled up the measure of his sorrows by embroiling him with Madame d'Épinai, and consequently with the *Encyclopedist* group, at the head of which was his best friend, Diderot. The heedlessness, exaggeration, and indiscretion of Diderot, and the distrustful susceptibility of Rousseau, rendered the faults, but not the unhappiness, reciprocal. When Rousseau quitted the Hermitage, sick and exhausted, in the heart of winter, it was with the loss of love, friendship, and every thing that gives value to life.¹

¹ The monuments of Rousseau's passion, his correspondence with Madame d'Houdetot, were not destroyed, as was long believed. A long letter, which belongs to the end of this crisis, and traces its most touching circumstances in glowing lines, was published in 1822, in the second edition of the *Histoire de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (by Musset-Pathay), t. II. p. 545. From this letter was borrowed the sublime saying of the *Confessions* (liv. ix.): "I loved her too much to wish to possess her!" A note, written in the crisis of passion, appeared January 1, 1848, in the *Bibliographie universelle, Journal du libraire et de l'amateur de livres*. Lastly, there exists in manuscript a third letter, in which Jean-Jacques, cured, or at least resigned, expresses the most touching and disinterested sentiments, and gives counsels of elevated morality to her whom

There are more legitimate objections to be made to Rousseau. He begins by a relapse into his *savage* Utopia. "Every thing is good on quitting the hands of the Author of Nature; every thing degenerates in the hands of man; . . . he changes the nature of the soil, the animals, and man himself; . . . it is necessary to train them for him, and to contort them after his fashion, . . . otherwise things would go on still worse as matters now stand." He appears to consider education only as a necessary evil.¹ He therefore still opposes here a nature abstract, and formed for immutability, to that real and progressive nature of man which he, nevertheless, knows very well how to define elsewhere, and of which *Émile* itself is only the admirable representation.²

Farther on, he opposes to each other, no longer an abstraction and a reality, but two realities, two orders of existence equally necessary, — the man and the citizen. "We must choose between making a man and a citizen: it is impossible to make both at the same time." The reason of this antithesis is, that he considers the natural man as absolutely independent, the social man as entirely dependent; so that it is necessary, according to him, to annihilate the first in order to create the second. The country, the *city*, presents itself to him only under that antique form in which the citizen no longer existed except as the member of the State. He apprehends no natural transition between the state of nature and the social state; and it is impossible for him to apprehend any, since the *city*, the nation, is, in his eyes, an entirely voluntary creation of the human will, a pure work of art, a pure *contract* of association. He does not see that there is something natural and instinctive in the grouping of races, the share of Providence in the formation of nationalities. He is the antipodes of that fatalistic, so-called *historic* school, which sees in nations nothing but species of natural vegetation, subjected to the laws of necessary development.

¹ Madame d'Épinai relates in her *Memoirs*, so hostile to Rousseau, that he shocked her greatly one day by pretending that "the child was not made to be educated, nor the parents to educate him." It was in one of those fits of passion which sometimes caused him to retrograde towards the beginning of his career.

² "While each species has its own instinct, man, having none perhaps that belongs to him, appropriates them all. . . . He indemnifies himself perhaps for what he lacks by faculties capable first of supplying the deficiency, and then of raising himself greatly above it." — *Discours sur l'inégalité*, part i. "It cannot be doubted that man is social by nature, or at least fitted to become so. . . . He therefore has innate sentiments relative to his species." — *Émile*.

It is not only towards its members, but towards other communities, that the country appears to him exclusively in the antique form and spirit. If he does not comprehend that it is possible to be at once the man of nature and the man of the city, neither does he comprehend that it is possible to be at once the citizen of the country and the citizen of the human race. The *patriots*, his disciples, correcting his lessons by those of the philosophers, his rivals, would one day disclose to the world the ideal of nationalities fraternally associated in humanity, at the same time that they proclaimed in an immortal formula the united rights of the *man* and the *citizen*.¹

The origin of Rousseau's errors lies in the wholly mathematical logic which he applies to the affairs of life, and which he carries out on a single line, when the resultant should proceed from the combination of different lines. He will not see that the world in general, and each organism in particular, is only a combination, and, consequently, a perpetual compromise between different principles. He only perceives one exclusive principle in each thing and each being, and does not attain to the reconciliation of contradictories; that is, of truths that seem opposite, and duties that seem conflicting. The individual, the family, the country, and humanity should nevertheless be reconciled: the limits are doubtless obscure; but so are those of liberty and Providence, the contradictory *par excellence*, and all the mysteries of life.

He does not attain this, we say; but he nevertheless dimly discerns the solution when he escapes from logic to return to his true nature, to sentiment and practical sense. After laying down the natural man and the citizen as incompatible, he ends in fact by asking whether, nevertheless, they may not be united, and postpones the answer till man has been studied in all the degrees of his formation; that is, to the conclusion of *Émile*. He already answers tacitly by admitting that a father owes men to his species, social men to society, and citizens to the State.²

There are, he continues, two forms of education, — the one public and common, the other private and domestic. Public education no longer exists, and can no longer exist. There is neither

¹ A philosopher of our days has given a beautiful formula to the same thought, — *the complete man in complete society* (Pierre Leroux). The value of this formula is wholly independent of the individual doctrines of its author.

² Herein is found a touching allusion to his own faults. "Neither poverty, nor toil, nor any earthly consideration, can exempt a father from supporting and bringing up his children himself." — *Émile*, l. i.

country nor citizens *among the moderns* (in the European monarchies).

He does not, therefore, develop here his ideas on public education, which are discerned scattered through his other writings.¹ He desires this to be especially gymnastic,—exercises of address and strength, manual labor rendered attractive, practical ideas given by the things themselves, singing and drawing; in ideas of another class, those of which the child can feel the practical utility, as reading, writing, and reckoning: ideas of national history, under the form of narratives, without books or dates, should come at the end, with those of morality, natural religion, and duty in general. The instruction should be given by lay-teachers, and, so far as possible, married. All this relates, as will be seen, to that first degree of instruction necessary for all, which the State owes to all, and which the State, in France as in other Catholic countries, gave at that time to no one,—a negligence, the penalty of which has been and is still cruelly expiated by French society.

There remains domestic or natural education. This is what he is about to develop by making himself the preceptor of an imaginary pupil, whom he selects of healthy body and average mind, in a temperate climate like France, in order to make him as general a type of man as possible.

But another work must precede that of the preceptor. He has just recalled women to real love: he now recalls them to maternity. Already Buffon had protested in the name of Reason and Nature against the barbarous slavery of swaddling-clothes, and reproached mothers for their forgetfulness of the duty of suckling their children; but reason had spoken in vain. The voice of feeling was destined to be more powerful. There is nothing superior to that celebrated fragment which begins, "Would ye return each to his first duties, begin with the mothers." It is with a mixture of passion and irresistible logic that Rousseau shows morals reforming of themselves, the family becoming reorganized, and with it all the virtues that follow in its train, as soon as mothers *deign to nourish their children*.

To give the child more liberty and less dominion over others; neither to command nor to obey him; to govern him, not by reason, but by possibilities and impossibilities; to suffer him to depend upon facts alone; to let experience be his only master; to permit the first education to be purely negative; to prevent

¹ In the article *Économie politique*; in the *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne*, etc.

rather than act; to prevent habits from being formed in order to preserve liberty; to prevent vices from being born (there are none original¹); to guarantee the heart from evil and the mind from error, instead of teaching virtue and truth directly,—such are the most general precepts given by Rousseau with respect to childhood.

The necessity for fundamental moral notions having arrived, they must be limited at first to immediate utility. The idea of property, originally founded on labor, and the idea of engagements, of voluntary agreements, are the starting-point. Thus Rousseau, who condemned property when he condemned society, now that he accepts the necessity of society, puts property at the basis: this is very logical. Only he associates with the idea of property that of obligatory assistance to the poor.²

The true use of childhood has been to prepare instruments for the soul by strengthening the body through a kind of experimental physics wholly instinctive. Study should not commence until the age of twelve or thirteen, when curiosity for knowledge begins to awaken with foresight in the child approaching adolescence, and he begins to ask *the use* of every thing. His studies should be directed at first to sensible objects, the phenomena of Nature; then to the practice of the natural or individual arts, which leads to that of the industrial or collective arts. The child should learn to esteem the arts in proportion to their utility, and not to their rarity or difficulty. Here there is the same evolution of ideas as with respect to property. Agriculture and metallurgy, lately execrated for having civilized the human race, are eulogized as among the arts most worthy of respect. The ideal pupil, *Émile*, is to learn a manual art, a trade. "The child is rich! What matters it? . . . You trust to the existing order of society, without realizing that this order is subject to inevitable revolutions, and that it is impossible either to foresee or to prevent what may happen to your children. . . . We are approaching critical times, and the age of revolution. I consider it impossible for the great monarchies of Europe to endure much longer."

¹ Rousseau decides here, somewhat hastily, a very mysterious question, — *man is naturally good*. This is true, abstractly, of the species; but what of the individual? How many native diversities do children bring into the world! The religions of the East and of Gaul, and all the ancient spiritualistic philosophy from Socrates to Origen, had endeavored to solve the problem of these diversities by the hypothesis of preëxistence.

² "When the poor were pleased to consent that there should be rich, the rich promised to support all those who should not have wherewithal to live either through their property or their labor." — *Émile*, liv. ii.

Ten years before, Rousseau had perceived the Revolution only as a vague and distant possibility, upon which it was not even allowable to seek to fix his eyes. Events had far advanced since that time.¹

Voltaire and many others greatly derided the *gentleman carpenter* of Rousseau. Thirty years had not passed, when more than one high personage had reason to regret not knowing how to earn a livelihood by the saw or the plane.²

It is not only through prudence, but through duty, that *Émile* is taught to labor. Every citizen, according to Rousseau, owes to society the cost of his support in personal toil.³

Youth approaches. Sensation has reigned alone in the earliest infancy; then reason has been awakened; now sentiment is about to speak in turn. "We have made," says the preceptor, "an acting and thinking being: to complete the man, it is necessary to make a loving being."

It is to be observed that the order of development assigned to man by Rousseau is in conformity with the order of the great psychologic ternary, — *strength, intellect, and love*.

Behold the age of the passions, the age of true life! Are we to stifle the passions, are we to prevent them from being born? Madness! The passions are from Nature. But are *all* the passions from Nature? No.

Here is marked the radical opposition between Rousseau and the theorists who have pretended to organize humanity on the satisfaction of all the factitious passions born of accidental circumstances, on the abandonment to all the fancies brought forth by an unregulated imagination, and who have effaced all distinction

¹ Rousseau speaks much more clearly, some years after, in a passage of his correspondence, in which he expresses the opinion that the *Seven-Years' War* would have brought about the immediate destruction of the French monarchy, had it not been for the talents of the minister, Choiseul.

² Rousseau makes his pupil a mechanic, and not a farm-laborer, because "the mechanic is free, and the farm-laborer is a slave." He supposes a social condition in which the mechanic always finds work ready to his hand, and does not foresee the great overcrowding of modern industrial society.

³ He does not claim that this labor must necessarily be manual. He has been warmly reproached for the exaggeration of the following passage: "An annuitant, whom the State pays for doing nothing, differs little, in my eyes, from a robber that lives at the expense of the passers-by." Such an hyperbole is deservedly unjustifiable; but it has not the meaning which has been given it. Rousseau does not dream of discussing the lawfulness of annuities: he attacks the annuitant, not because he receives the revenue of the capital which he has loaned to the State, but because he takes advantage of this revenue to do nothing, to avoid paying his debt of labor to society, to consume without producing, as is said to-day.

between the passions. Rousseau has not proscribed fancy in the child to authorize it in the man.

"To feel the true relations of man both in the species and in the individual, and to regulate the affections of the soul according to these relations by guiding the imagination, — such is the summary of all human wisdom in the use of the passions."

The generation of the passions, whether natural or lawful, follows; for there are some which are lawful, which are not immediately natural.

First, The love of self, from which proceeds the love of our fellows and all benevolent feelings, and which must not be confounded with self-love, or the feeling of distinction, the parent of hateful and jealous feelings.

Secondly, The love of woman. The inclination of nature and instinct does not determine the object of this, which is determined by reason, unknown to us.¹ "Love is made blind, because it has better sight than we, and sees affinities which we could not discern. Love is not a natural passion: it is the law and curb of the inclinations of nature."

He here replies to Buffon and himself.²

Thirdly, Friendship. This results indirectly from the awakening of the soul by sexual sensibility, as yet without object: it precedes, in fact, the essential passion, love, but proceeds from it in principle.

Fourthly, General friendship, or the love of humanity.

This review of the affections of the youth is concluded by reflections of great beauty on this necessity of attachments, which is at once the result of our imperfection and the foundation of our happiness. "God alone enjoys an absolute and solitary happiness. If any imperfect being could be sufficient for himself, he would be alone; he would be miserable." This truth is applicable to all the degrees of the finite being, whatever may be the perfection which he is supposed to have attained. The finite being is not designed to live alone, face to face with the Infinite. He is created incomplete that he may complete himself by another, at once like and different from himself. Herein is the

¹ He means, not reflective reason, but a sort of intuitive reason which proceeds from feeling.

² See *ante*, p. 65. He has hitherto limited the meaning of the word *nature* to instinctive force; but he does not do this always, which sometimes gives rise to equivocation. Just now, he understood by nature, which seems to us far preferable, all the faculties of man, and not merely the physical basis.

final cause of the indestructible difference of the sexes. When Rousseau afterwards dreams of the future life under the form of an eternal solitary contemplation, it is no longer the philosopher that speaks, but only the unhappy lover and forsaken friend,—the wearied and wounded soul that aspires to repose.

Rousseau is alike admirable when he shows to a dissolute community the consequence of purity of morals preserved to an advanced epoch of youth, and teaches the diversion of the ardor of the senses by the very activity of the body, the mind, and the heart. For this critical age, on which the whole life depends, he has reserved and accumulated all that can seize and captivate a youthful soul, to which every thing is new in the world of the mind,—history, poetry, ethics, philology, the study of the good and the beautiful, and, lastly, at the radiant summit of that intellectual edifice which rises to the heavens, the supreme revelations of God and the immortal soul.

The system according to which Rousseau conducts his pupil almost to the age of manhood before making him acquainted with his Creator and himself, on account of the inability to form an idea of a rational God which he ascribes to the child, has, however, been opposed, and with reason. It is an exaggeration of the *negative* method adopted towards the child by Rousseau. There exists a decisive objection: in whatever condition the child is supposed, unless sequestered from all intercourse with man, it is absolutely impossible that he should not hear of God before the age of sixteen or eighteen; consequently he could not thus be spared the danger, dreaded by Rousseau, of forming false ideas concerning him. Rousseau might, perhaps, have developed the idea of God according to the principles which he applies to the development of man, and, since he governs the child by the idea of force or necessity, have presented God to him at first under this aspect, then as intellect and love.

Be this as it may, if he erred, what a magnificent redemption of this error was the SAVOYARD VICAR'S CONFESSION OF FAITH! The reader cannot refrain from a thrill of awe, when the philosopher, when the man, rejecting the fictions of the writer, enters directly upon the stage with the priest of Turin, his first master, and propounds, in the presence of the Alps and the rising sun, the fundamental questions of nature and human destiny. The annals of the human mind had not witnessed so solemn a moment since the hour when the doubt of Descartes was resolved in his immortal affirmation.

The philosophy of sentiment was about to have, like that of pure reason, its *Dissertation on Method*.

Reason is obscured anew ; doubt has returned : the suffering soul is fluctuating in the infinite variety of human opinions. What are we to do ?

To limit our researches to what immediately interests us, and to be wise enough to remain ignorant of the rest ; to throw aside the philosophers and their reasonings, which give us nothing but negative results, and take another guide, the internal light, the conscience ; to admit as evident the ideas to which, in the sincerity of our heart, we cannot refuse our consent, and as true those which appear to us to have a necessary connection with the latter, and not to trouble ourselves about the rest when they lead to nothing practically useful.

It is, therefore, the evidence of the heart, moral evidence, and no longer rational and mathematical evidence, that becomes the principle of certainty. The road which Rousseau aspires to follow is not the transcendent road of Descartes, but that within the reach of the simple, — the highway of the human mind.¹

"But what am I," he continues, "to judge of things ? It is necessary, first of all, to examine myself."

He does not divest himself of all contingency, as Descartes had done. He places himself immediately between the phenomena. "I exist, and I have senses by which I am affected." He seeks to prove that the causes or objects of the sensations which take place within us are outside of us. He would have been more faithful to his principle by affirming the reality of the objects, of the *non ego*, as a truth of sentiment. Arrived more or less legitimately at the reality of matter (that is to say, of that which he feels outside of himself, and which acts upon his senses), he looks again within himself, and discovers there an active principle in the faculty of comparison. "Our sensations are passive," he had already said ; "but our perceptions or ideas arise from an active principle." We are here far from Condillac and *transformed sensation*. Behold the starting-point of the metaphysical renaissance ! Only Rousseau does not yet go back to the first manifestation of the active principle, and leaves to a more methodical philosopher² the demonstration of the activity of the

¹ *Practical reason*, which Kant opposes to *pure reason*, is nothing else than the sentiment or conscience of Rousseau. The powerful but ultra work of Kant, the *Criticism of Pure Reason*, is the exaggeration of the work of Rousseau. Kant is the outgrowth of Rousseau, like Hegel and Schelling, of Spinoza and Buffon.

² La Romignière. Rousseau sees clearly that the idea of number and all the ideas

soul already in practice in the attention which precedes comparison.

"Sure of myself, of my own activity," he continues, "I look outside myself. Motion is not essential to this matter which my senses reveal to me, the natural state of which is repose. I recognize two kinds of motion in bodies, — the one communicated, the other spontaneous and voluntary: the first is that of inorganic matter, of the world as a whole, subject to general forces which are not beings, but constant laws; the second is my own, that of man, and I believe also, by analogy, that of animals. The first causes of motion are not in matter. From one effect after another, it is still necessary to go back to some will as the first cause; for to suppose a progress of causes to infinity is to suppose none at all. The principle of all action, of all motion, is in the will of a free being: a will, therefore, moves the universe, and animates nature.¹

Matter moved testifies a will. Matter moved according to certain laws shows an intelligence. The unity of the system of the world attests a sole intelligence. It is a monstrous improbability to pretend that the order of the universe results from a fortuitous combination of elements: it is impossible that passive and lifeless matter should have produced living and sentient beings, that a blind fatality should have produced intelligent beings, that that which is devoid of thought should have produced thinking beings. Can there be more in the effect than there is in the cause?

Intelligence, power, will, and goodness are the first attributes which I perceive in that Being, active through itself, which moves and arranges the universe, and which I call God.

A new return to self ensues. What is the rank of the human species in the universe? Here appears a grievous contrast. Relatively to the universe, the human species holds the first rank,

of relations are not given us by the passive principle of sensation, although sensation furnishes the occasion and material for them.

¹ He declares himself unable to comprehend living organic molecules (Buffon), and, with much greater reason, inorganic matter, sentient without possessing senses (Maupertuis and Diderot). He justly denies spontaneous motion to the pretended molecules. How, indeed, would they put themselves in motion without will, without being impelled by an internal impulse? *Necessary motion* is an expression devoid of meaning. As to the words, *universal force*, *blind force diffused in nature*, they are not destitute of all meaning, as Rousseau affirms; but they have a double meaning. *Force* designates, in its most precise and most profound meaning, a being; in less exact language, a law. *Universal force* signifies either a *universal being*, a *unit by nature*, which abolishes the reality of molecules, or a *law emanating from the universal being*, which brings back the initial will, — Pantheism or Deism.

at least on earth, and crowns the general order; relatively to itself, it offers nothing but confusion and disorder. Are we to accuse Providence? No. Man is free.¹ He can choose. He can err. Thence proceeds evil on the earth. But whence come the errors of man? From his duality. Two principles are discerned in him, one of which elevates him to truth and goodness, the other of which lowers him, and places him under the subjugation of the senses. One is thinking and sentient, simple and indivisible substance, mind; the other, inert and divisible substance, matter.

Had Rousseau studied Leibnitz more, he would not perhaps have been so positive concerning the two substances and the character which he attributes to matter. The solution which he gives of the origin of evil is incident to an hypothesis concerning the nature of things, which would have been greatly out of place in the *Vicar's Profession of Faith*, and which he takes care not to introduce therein, but which he repeatedly enunciates in his *Correspondence*.² Rousseau, strange to say, leaned to the dualism of the ancient Greek philosophers: he was inclined to believe in Matter uncreated and coeternal with Mind, and to see in God less the Omnipotent, the absolute and infinite Being, than the Demiurge, the Arranger of Matter. If the world was not created better, it was apparently because Matter opposed obstacles which Mind was unable to overcome: God was truly sovereign only in the spiritual world of the future life, in which all was to be his work. Nothing so clearly shows the weakness of the human mind as to see the restorer of religious sentiment causing the retrogression of the theological idea of twenty centuries, disregarding the supreme and necessary unity of the creation, through an opposite excess to that of Pantheism, and suffering shipwreck on that equivocal formula of God as pure spirit, the danger of which Malebranche and Fénelon had, notwithstanding, pointed out so clearly.

Apart from this strange opinion, Rousseau replies, with respect to the unmerited ills of man, or those which appear such, by the necessity of trial, by moral progress purchased at the cost of suffering, and by the compensations of the future life.

"What is this life of the soul," he continues, "beyond death? Is the soul immortal *by its nature*? I know not: nevertheless,

¹ To be free is to be determined by nothing foreign to one's self. "To prevent man from being wicked, is it necessary to confine him to instinct, and make him a brute? Could Providence give the prize for well-doing to him who had been unable to do wrong?" This is Rousseau's own answer to the regrets expressed in the two *Disquisitions* for the state of nature, when men were ignorant both of good and evil.

² Letter to Voltaire, August, 1756; Letter to M. —, January, 1769.

I apprehend how the body is destroyed by the division of the parts ; while I do not apprehend how the soul, a simple being, can die." He might have added, that the term *death*, signifying only the dissolution of composites, is devoid of meaning, applied to a simple being : *annihilation* is a word, it is not an idea ; for it is absolutely impossible to conceive that a thing which exists can cease to exist.

"The remembrance of the good or evil use of the present life will constitute, in the next, the felicity of the good and the torment of the wicked, when, delivered from the illusion of the senses, we shall enjoy the contemplation of the Supreme Being and the eternal truths in him. I know not whether the torments of the wicked will be everlasting : I have difficulty in believing it."

This doubt is a reservation which it is not easy to comprehend in so bold a book ; for he affirms the negative repeatedly in a very decided manner in his *Correspondence*. This part of the *Vicar's Profession of Faith* was to be completed by two letters of the highest importance, — one to Voltaire, in August, 1756 ; the other to an anonymous person, January, 1769.¹

"The essential truths," he continues, "thus deduced from the impression of sensible objects and of internal feeling, it remains to inquire what maxims I should draw from them to fulfil my destiny on earth according to the intention of Him who placed me here. These rules I find written by Nature in the depths of my heart. We believe ourselves following the impulse of Nature while we are resisting it : in listening to what it says to our senses, we mistake what it says to our hearts. . . . There is at the bottom of the soul an innate principle of justice and virtue, independent of experience, the basis of our judgment, in spite of ourselves :

¹ The letter to Voltaire was written at the moment when the latter abandoned optimism for a grievous scepticism. Rousseau proposes therein to correct the optimistic maxim, *every thing is good* which seems to deny the too certain particular evil, by *the whole is good* ; that is, *every thing is good in relation to the whole*. He believes that "each material being is created in the best possible manner in relation to the whole, and each intelligent and sensible being in the best possible manner in relation to himself. But this rule must be applied to the whole duration of each sensible being, and not to some particular instant of its duration, such as human life ; which shows how closely the question of Providence pertains to that of the immortality of the soul . . . and to that of eternal punishment, which neither you nor I, nor any man that thinks well of God, will ever believe. . . . If God exists, he is perfect ; if he is perfect, he is wise, powerful, and just ; if he is just and powerful, my soul is immortal." He admits that it is impossible to give an *incontestable, mathematical* demonstration either of God or the immortal soul : these two fundamental truths are proved by feeling. On eternal punishment, see also the Letter to M. Vernes, February, 1758 ; and the Letter to M. —, January, 1769.

I call this conscience. The (immediate) acts of the conscience are not judgments, but feelings. The senses mislead us : reason itself deceives us ; conscience never deceives us." The morality of interest is contrary to Nature : we are naturally full of feelings, altogether foreign to material interest ; of feelings which impel us either towards our fellows, or towards the ideal under all its aspects. It is untrue that morality varies according to time and place : its essential principles are everywhere the same through the diversity of customs. The natural feelings speak in favor of the common interest : reason refers every thing to the individual ; virtue cannot be established by reason alone. The wicked (that is, they who do not listen to conscience) refer every thing to themselves, and make themselves the centre of every thing : the good regulate themselves with regard to the whole, to the common centre, which is God, and the concentric circles, which are human beings. If the Divinity does not exist, if there is no centre, the wicked are right, and the good are mad.¹

True happiness is not of this world : while waiting for the true life, let us contemplate, let us meditate on God in his works, without asking any thing of him ; or, at least, let us ask him only to set us right if we fall in good faith into some dangerous error. In elevating itself to God, the soul gives itself, by its own effort, what it asks of its Creator.

There is at the bottom of this a tendency towards the Pelagian theory, which considers the moral creation as definitively made, and which, absorbed by a single side of the truth,—the side of liberty,—does not see the coöperation, the necessary support, of God in every thing ; which does not see, in a word, God *immanent* in the world. If the reasonableness of asking God to modify for our individual advantage the phenomena of the physical order, the order of necessity, governed by general laws, may be disputed, it is precisely in the moral order, the order of liberty, that we are to solicit his assistance. God is not only an ocean from which the soul draws at pleasure, but a living ocean into which the soul is plunged, and without the perpetual, vivifying action of which, the soul neither could nor would be any thing. *God is the abode of spirits*, says Malebranche. Rousseau, as we have already indicated, falls at times into the opposite excess to Pantheism.

He nevertheless triumphantly rehabilitates the only two *necessary* ideas, God and the immortal soul ; and he rehabilitates them, as

¹ The lack of sanction in the morality of the philosophers (infidels), he says farther on, renders this morality powerless.

he proposed, only by means which are within the individual reach of all mankind,—by the impression of sensible objects or the observation of Nature, and by internal feeling or conscience. He willingly leaves outside his method an order of proofs of immense authority, but one which exacts a knowledge above the common reach; that is, the historical proofs founded on the consent of the human race, on universal feeling, which show us these two ideas serving as the basis of human societies since the origin of things.¹

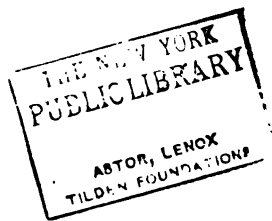
Natural religion, that is, that resulting from the moral nature of man, once established, he asks how any other religion than the natural one can be necessary; what it can add that would be useful to morality. If we had listened only to what God says to the heart of man, there would never have been but one religion on earth. God wishes to be worshipped in spirit and in truth; this is the essential point: the external worship is a matter of human police. Human evidence on points of fact is void when it is not confirmed by reason: even when it is not contrary thereto, it is prodigiously difficult to verify.

He repeats Spinoza's arguments against miracles, and raises up objections to the absolute authority of the revelations contained in books. "The infallible authority of the Church, argued by the Catholics, avails nothing, if as great an array is needed to prove this authority as directly to prove the Scriptures."

He does not, however, explicitly deduce the rejection of positive revelation, and only rejects the obligation to acknowledge it in order to be saved. Here is found that magnificent testimony rendered to the gospel and its author, placed by him above all books and all men.² This testimony was never contradicted; but it was explained by subsequent writings,—the *Letters from the Mountain*, and the *Letter* of January 15, 1769. He admits, as to *moral proofs*, the revelation (of Jesus Christ) as having emanated from the Spirit of God, "without knowing the manner thereof, and without tormenting himself to discover it." He admits that the history of the life of Jesus has not been *essentially* altered,

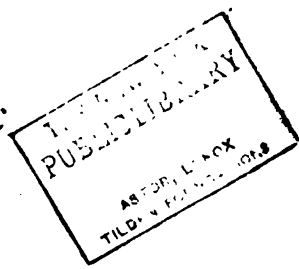
¹ Some exceptions have been sought as to the immortality of the soul: there are none as to the existence of God. Rousseau takes up the historical proofs in his *Lettre à l'archevêque de Paris*.

² We discover, in this so justly celebrated passage, somewhat too strong a tendency to exaggerate the opposition in order to strengthen the conclusions. To glorify Christ, it was not necessary to depreciate Socrates, or so much to despise the Jewish people, the people of the Maccabees, in order to set off the sublimity of what sprung from them. The pious recluses of the wilderness, the Essenes, were not unworthy to prepare the way for the cradle of the Messiah.





Louis x v 1793
after the painting by *David*



and, while setting aside *proof by miracles*, does not deny "the extraordinary things which Jesus, enlightened by the Spirit of God, was able to effect by *natural means unknown to his disciples and to us*." He makes a distinction between the Christianity of Jesus Christ and that of St. Paul, "who had not known Christ."

Thus his final conclusion, his inmost thought, is the acknowledgment of the divine mission of Christ, and consequently of the government of Providence on earth, combined with the sufficiency of natural religion for salvation. We feel what a distance there is between the Christian Deism of Rousseau and the Epicurean Deism of Voltaire. The Deism of Rousseau differs little from what is to-day called Unitarianism.

Rousseau grants that separate systems of religion may exist by reason of climate or of the genius of nations, and that they are good when God is served properly therein: but he condemns, in the name of morality, those which are based on intolerance, and on the dogma, that, outside the Church, there is no salvation; or in other terms, on the dogma of infallibility combined with that of eternal punishment.

"Keep your soul in a state always to desire that there should be a God, and you will never doubt that there is one. Avoid proud unbelief like blind fanaticism. Dare to confess God among the philosophers; dare to preach humanity to the intolerant: you will be alone on your side, perhaps; . . . no matter. . . . Say what is true, do what is right: the most important thing to man is to fulfil his duties upon earth, and it is in forgetting himself that he labors for himself. Private interest deceives us: the hope of justice is the only thing that is not deceitful."

Such are the lofty and religious conclusions of this celebrated *Profession of Faith*,—the greatest work bequeathed to us by the eighteenth century.

Is this to say that the Deism of Rousseau, even abstaining from touching on the question of positive religions, is sufficient to satisfy the human mind? This belief is true: it is pure, but restricted within narrow limits. These limits were needed: there are times when the mind is forced to condense itself in order to concentrate its strength. It was necessary, in order to resist materialism, and, above all, scepticism, to fall back upon certain and fundamental dogmas, to *save the trunk at the expense of the branches*,¹ and to confine himself within what was directly and im-

¹ This saying, repeated by Rousseau in *Emile*, originated with Duclos in an unpublished letter to Rousseau. It carries him very far. He is not content with omitting

mediately necessary to the moral life. The human soul was not destined, however, to remain imprisoned within this immutable circle, any more than society to remain motionless in that pastoral life so much regretted by Rousseau. For the progress of the intellect, for the very development of the moral and religious sentiment, the glance of the soul must strive to discern what it is not permitted to embrace. In practical life, in all that is not positive and certain duty, are we guided otherwise than by probabilities and hypotheses? Yet we would banish them from ideal life: we would abstain from extending the inductions of our mind, and directing the impulses of our hearts, towards the sphere of ontology and theodicy; towards the degrees of which we have a presentiment; towards the endless scale of the future life! What an immense gap is left in the present life if we have not an undefined conception of the future life, and if we do not draw conclusions from the present relations to the relations beyond the tomb! Is the domain of certainty, moreover, immutable for man?

After this vast and sublime episode, Rousseau returns to his subject, and finishes his work. He has educated the man: he is about to educate the woman, and to conduct them both to the decisive crisis where their existences unite to form the complete human being. Parts of the first books of *Émile* are applicable to what is common to both sexes: the fifth book, entitled *Sophie*, by a touching remembrance of Madame d'Houdetot, comprises every thing that specially concerns the education of woman. The differences between the two kinds of education are characterized with lofty sagacity. Rousseau's conclusion concerning the two sexes is moral equality with diversity of functions. He at once refutes, tacitly or explicitly, the popular traditions concerning the inferiority of woman,¹ and the errors of the Utopists, who had sought

he rejects all the developments of theology, and sees nothing but words without ideas in all these *mysterious dogmas*, among which he ranks the Trinity itself. His language does not differ from that of Montesquieu or Voltaire. It is evident that he has made no attempt to account for them. In setting aside the Christian theology, he does not even draw the necessary consequences of Platonic idealism. He considers God as the author of all goodness, and not sufficiently as goodness itself; justice, truth, and goodness being nothing else than God himself, or the Perfect, considered in separate points of view. For want of fathoming this idea, Rousseau does not explain that so-called Atheists are often only souls living morally on a few fragments of God, so to speak. An Atheist who believes in *virtue* or *order* is not an Atheist: he calls God *virtue* or *order*; that is all. Only knowing God *solely* in this point of view, his isolated and fragmentary ideal is merely an abstraction without support, connection, or complement; and his faith has the appearance of inconsistency, since it has neither sanction nor cause.

¹ The reason of the inferiority attributed by the ancients to woman was derived es-

in antiquity, or who were to seek, after him, to assimilate woman to man, and to call her to the same civil functions; errors under which, on close investigation, will be discovered the idea, as absurd in a physiological as in a moral point of view, that woman is only an imperfect man. Rousseau, however, accords to man the form of command in the household, and maintains his title of chief (man, in fact, is the *chief*, the head, as woman is the *heart*, of the human couple); but he comments on the *obedience* of woman in a manner quite reassuring to her dignity, while admirably defining the nature of the feminine mind.

"The reason of women is a practical reason, which causes them adroitly to find the means of arriving at a known end, but which does not cause them to discover this end. In the association of the sexes, woman is the eye, and man the arm, but with such dependence upon each other,¹ that it is from man that woman learns what must be seen, and from woman that man learns what must be done. In the harmony that reigns between them, we know not which contributes the greater share. Each follows the impulse of the other; each obeys, and both are masters. . . . Man commands; woman rules him who commands: . . . she reigns by causing herself to be commanded to do what she wishes.

"The investigation of abstract truth, the generalities of the

pecially from the physical order. Man was, to them, the active principle; woman, the passive principle: whence, by a deduction seemingly logical, man was mind, and woman matter. The question necessarily changed its aspect with the modern world when it was perceived that woman has the preponderance in the domain of sentiment if man has the same advantage in the domain of reason. Man has the superiority in two of the essential attributes of the psychological ternary, — strength and intellect; woman in a single one, — love: but this attribute, the last in the abstract analysis of the metaphysical generation, is the first in the domain of reality; it is the very breath of life. To man belongs both the scientific determination of ideas and the administration of external things, action, work in general; also great politicians, great theologians and metaphysicians, great dogmatic moralists, and even great artists, are, in general, men, and not women: man gives the form to every thing; but woman gives the substance to almost every thing, and inspires almost every thing. She does not create; she causes man to do so. It is, moreover, only in theoretical reason, in the powers of generalization, that woman is inferior to man: she has, as Rousseau shows, the superiority in practical reason. Practical reason, the logic of second causes, separated from metaphysical reason and general principles, too often transforms itself into a critical, negative spirit; and the two essential elements of woman, sentiment and practical reason, are then at war within her.

¹ The dependence of the sexes is reciprocal, he says elsewhere: nevertheless, woman is more dependent on man than man on woman. "This indisputable difference pertains equally in woman to her inferiority in physical strength and her superiority in affectional strength. She is more dependent, because she has greater need both of physical assistance and moral affection; she is more dependent, because she loves more.

sciences, are not within the province of women. Their studies should be wholly practical. It is for them to make the application of the principles which man has discovered, and it is for them to make the observations which lead man to the establishment of these principles. Men study ideas and external nature: women study men. Things of genius belong to man: women are the best judges of things of taste. Men philosophize better than women on the human heart; but the latter read the heart of men better than they. It is for women to discover, so to speak, experimental morality: it is for us to reduce it to a system. Woman has more wit, and man more genius: woman observes, and man reasons. From this coöperation results the clearest light and the most complete knowledge that the human mind can acquire of itself."

The question between public and private education does not exist with respect to women, according to Rousseau. Every young girl should be brought up by her mother. "One of the reasons why morals are better in general in Protestant countries is that conventual education is unknown there."¹ Maternal education harmonizes well, in Rousseau, with another essential idea,—that young girls should enjoy great liberty, a great latitude in external life, and that married women should confine themselves to their households; that assemblies and public places are calculated for those whose choice is not yet made, and not for those whose existence is fixed. In all his works, he dwells strongly upon this idea. He contrasts, on this point, the customs of the ancient Greeks and the English with those of the French, while insisting on the necessity of embellishing by the arts and by a certain elegant simplicity that domestic life to which he wishes to restrict women, and from which he sees their legitimate influence unceasingly diffused among external things which are interdicted to their direct action.

Nothing is more delicate and just than his views on the principle that women are the natural judges of the merit of men. When they have lost their ascendancy, and when their judgments are no longer any thing to men, it is, in his opinion, the certain token of moral decline. The desire of winning their approbation, and, with much more reason, their love, is that great motive power of the actions of men which Helvetius distorts so grossly by limiting it to the desire of winning the pleasures of the senses. There is, nevertheless, an apparent contradiction here in Rousseau, when

¹ Fénelon, at heart, thought the same. — See his work on the *Education of Girls*.

he dwells at length upon the great things inspired by the enthusiasm of love, and, notwithstanding, avows "that all is illusion in love." The reason is, that he gives two meanings to the word *love*, as to the word *nature*. He sees here in love only the aspiration towards the ideal: the beloved object is taken for the type of the perfection that is in the soul; therefore it is not the mistress, but the ideal, that is loved. This was, indeed, the ruling characteristic of chivalric love. But Rousseau had already indicated another kind of love, — that sentiment of affinity or sympathy, founded no longer on the illusions of the soul, but on the essential fitness of nature; that love in which we love a person instead of a type, an imperfect person, and one whom we know to be imperfect, but susceptible of improvement. This sentiment is real love, and, in some sort, comprises the other kind of love; for we would not love if the person beloved did not bear some relation to what our particular nature disposes us to regard as the type of her sex. Whenever the affinity between two beings of different sexes is complete, whenever they aspire to precisely the same ideal, they are, so to speak, a single moral person, and the formation of this indestructible association is, doubtless, the true final cause of the diversity of the sexes. Rousseau does not succeed in harmonizing his double conception of love, or in clearly defining his idea. The reason is, that, limiting himself to considering love in the relations of the present life, he does not follow it beyond time; and that this sentiment, like all that belongs to the infinite, has neither its final cause nor its law in this world. Rousseau has flashes of inspiration on this subject in his *Julie*; but they are only flashes. It would have been requisite to develop and complete Dante and Petrarch beyond the limit of the belief of the Middle Ages; and this work Rousseau does not accomplish.

He shows at least great practical wisdom in the application to marriage of that principle of natural fitness which he had recognized in love. "Where this kind of fitness, the only essential one, is superseded by the fitness of conventionality and public opinion, and where marriages are made by paternal authority, good morals and the happiness of marriage are sacrificed to the apparent order of society."¹

¹ "Parents choose their daughter's husband, and consult her for form's sake. It should be the reverse: the daughter should make the choice, and consult her parents. Would you make happy marriages, forget human institutions, and consult nature. Conventional relations are not without importance; but the influence of natural relations prevails over them to such a degree, that it decides the fate of life." He dwells, besides, on all the value that should be placed upon fitness of education.

It is here, at the moment of marrying his pupil, that he solves the problem which he has declared insoluble — the harmony of the man and the citizen — by acknowledging that it is necessary to be a citizen before being a husband and father. It does not always depend upon us to exercise the rights and fulfil the duties of the citizen; but nothing can exempt us from knowing them. Even if we have no longer a country, a free country, a native land, at least, remains to us: the native land may become the country.¹ The master, therefore, reveals to the pupil the principles of political law, which we are about to behold elaborated in the *Social Contract*,² and terminates his work with counsels of admirable delicacy and good sense on the rights and duties of the young spouses, and on the means of insuring domestic happiness so far as human imperfection permits. This is, indeed, true civilization, the civilization of moral progress, that reforms the real brutality disguised under our social refinements.³

Émile, despite the objections aroused by certain portions, is perhaps the profoundest study of human nature existing in our language, or in any other of the modern tongues. It is certainly the book that suggests the most thought, even where the author does not think correctly. What genius was needed to arrive at such conclusions after setting out from the impracticable beginning of the two *Dissertations*, and to make paradox the road to wisdom! It may be said, without exaggeration, that this book was an ark of safety, launched by Providence on the waves of scepticism and materialism, and that it collected all the essential sentiments, all the fundamental principles of moral life, which were about to be swallowed up. Suppose Rousseau stricken out of the eighteenth century, whither, we ask seriously and sincerely, would the progress of the human mind have drifted?

Émile really sums up the whole work of Rousseau for his other

¹ He treats the proverb, *Ubi benè, ibi patria*, as execrable.

² "Political law is still to be born. . . . Grotius has, at the bottom, the same principles as Hobbes. The only modern able to create this science would have been the illustrious Montesquieu; but he forebore to treat of the principles of political law. He contented himself with the positive law of established governments." — *Émile*, liv. v.

³ In order to follow the development of ideas, compare Rousseau on woman with the publications of our times which have treated of woman in general, of marriage, and of the education of girls, particularly Madame Necker de Saussure's admirable book *L'Éducation progressive*; *Le Mariage chrétien*, by Madame de Gasparin, in which is found the great saying, *Marriage is the end of marriage*; and *L'Histoire morale des femmes*, by M. Ernest Legouvé, a healthy and solid work, at once very favorable to the true emancipation of woman, and greatly opposed to the Utopists, who pervert the nature of women under pretext of enfranchising them.

monument: that *Social Contract*, destined to so brilliant an influence on the Revolution which he had just predicted, and for which he was paving the way, was only the development of a part of *Émile*. *Émile* is the book of man in general, of man under all his aspects: the *Social Contract* is the book of the politician, the citizen.

Rousseau does not propose therein an absolute and abstract type. What he seeks are "laws as they might be, with men as they are," and the reconciliation of utility and justice. "The social order," he says, "does not come from Nature: it is, therefore, founded on agreements."

Few axioms have given rise to such grave discussion. Against the principle of the *Social Contract* have been argued original agreements, in the name of the *necessary* development of humanity, or providential laws. Rousseau himself acknowledges in *Émile* that man "is born social, or, at least, formed to become so;" from which it has been concluded that he contradicts himself. He does not contradict himself; but he does wrong in not explaining himself. Here, again, is found the eternal duality. Yes, Providence made men for society; but it made them free, and they associated together voluntarily, and not because constrained to do so by the physical laws of Nature: the voluntary association of men is not the necessary association of bees. Men having associated together voluntarily, there was, therefore, an explicit or implied social contract; and this contract, immutable in its principles, and always modifiable in its applications, is, or should be, at once the work of human liberty and the manifestation of those eternal laws of justice and reason which man has not created, and cannot change.

The most ancient and the only natural society, pursues Rousseau, is that of the family. Here, again, the domain of agreements appears from the first step. As soon as man attains the age of reason, he alone being the judge of the means suited to self-preservation, thereby becomes his own master; and, if the children that have become men continue to remain united with the father, it is no longer naturally or through necessity, but voluntarily. If, therefore, the permanence of the family itself is already a fact of will and moral order, by much greater reason is it impossible for society to have any other origin than free agreements. Force, being the antipodes of right, cannot found social right. Even though it be admitted that a people can alienate itself to a king or a dynasty, neither can this be the origin of society: for a people to be able

to alienate itself, it is necessary that the people should first exist. The law of the plurality of votes, by virtue of which it is claimed that a people can give itself away, is itself an agreement, and supposes, once at least, unanimity. What is the motive power of this first agreement by which a people is a people?

This motive power is "the (moral, and not physical) necessity of associating together for the purpose of overcoming the obstacles which, in the state of Nature, are injurious to the preservation of man."

This is no longer the paradoxical hypothesis or bitter language of the *Dissertation on Inequality*: it is no longer the choler of the misanthrope, but the wisdom of the sage, that speaks.¹

The problem of the *Social Contract* is "to find a form of association which will defend and protect with all the common power the person and property of each associate, and by which each one, uniting with all, will, nevertheless, obey none but himself, and remain as free as before. The *Social Contract* gives the solution. The clauses of this contract, although they may have never perhaps been formally enunciated, are everywhere tacitly admitted and recognized, until the social compact has been violated. As a matter of course, they are reduced to a single one,—the total alienation of each associate with all his rights to the whole community," and the reciprocal engagement of the public with private individuals.

Is the man, therefore, wholly absorbed by the citizen?

It is indispensable to study Rousseau's idea well before judging it.

There is a first reservation which it is scarcely necessary to point out when the author of the *Savoyard Vicar's Confession of Faith* is in question. The individual can only alienate to the community the rights which he possesses. He has not a right to transgress the eternal laws,—the laws of the conscience. Society has not a right, therefore, to prescribe any thing to him contrary to these laws: such a prescript would be the most scandalous violation of the social contract; and the individual remains, therefore, in the tribunal of the conscience, the judge of society itself.

Now, what is the nature of the sovereignty attributed to the re-

¹ See *ante*, p. 65, *et seq.* "Instead of destroying the natural equality, the fundamental compact substitutes, on the contrary, a moral and legitimate equality for the physical inequality caused by Nature among men. . . . Unequal as they may be in strength or genius, they all become equal by agreement and law." — *Contrat social*, liv. i. ch. viii.

public or body politic, that public person formed by the union of all the rest? The point in question is not, need we repeat, absolute sovereignty, which can be only in God, but a relative and purely political sovereignty. Is this sovereignty exercised, in general and in particular, over all the acts of the life of all and each? No. The social compact gives indeed to the body politic an absolute power over all its members in the sense that the sovereign or the collective being is the sole judge of the sacrifices which it imposes on its members for the common interest: the country has a right to oblige all the citizens to sacrifice their affections, their property, and their lives, for its safety; but the general will should be general in its object as in its essence: in other terms, the sovereign can manifest himself only through the laws, and the law is what is made by the people when the whole people decrees concerning the whole people. The sovereign can only decree concerning particular facts or persons. If a particular fact is in question, it is then merely a matter of litigation, in which the individuals interested are one party, and the public, with the exception of these individuals, the other party. The sovereign can neither favor nor wrong an individual. The sovereign can impose nothing by name upon an individual.¹ "A single act of evident injustice done to an individual would dissolve the social compact in rigorous justice, and if regard were not had for human weakness. Are we told that it is well that one should perish for all? I admire this sentence from the lips of a worthy and virtuous patriot, who voluntarily and through duty devotes himself to death for the safety of his country; but, if it is meant that the government shall be permitted to sacrifice an innocent man for the safety of the multitude, I hold this maxim as one of the most execrable ever invented by tyranny, and the most directly opposed to the fundamental laws of society."

Helvetius had written, "Every thing becomes lawful and even virtuous for the public safety." Rousseau makes the comment, "The public safety is nothing if all the private individuals are not in safety."² It may be judged whether it is to Rousseau, or to the

¹ If the State needs the land of a private individual, it cannot take it from him by an act of sovereignty: it may expropriate it by an administrative act by virtue of the supremacy of public property over private property, but in consideration of an indemnity; and it does not belong to the State to fix this indemnity itself, since it is here a party, and not a sovereign unit. The indemnity should be fixed by arbiters.

² *Mélanges: Réfutation du livre de l'Esprit*. The preceding passage is extracted from the article *Économie politique* of the *Encyclopédie*, which is, in part, the outline of the *Contrat Social*. Rousseau, in the *Lettres de la Montagne*, forcibly protests against arbitrary

school which he so much opposed, that the responsibility should be imputed of the interpretation given in our tempestuous times to the doctrine of the public safety. If the disciples themselves of Rousseau, hurried away by the excess of passion and danger, practised the maxims which he condemned, he cannot be justly blamed for it.

We admit, nevertheless, that this second reservation, however important it may be, is not and cannot be sufficient. The absorption of the man by the citizen being laid down as a principle, the rights of the human person cannot be sufficiently protected. The sovereign, such as he is defined by Rousseau, cannot specially wrong any individual; but he may wrong liberty in general. "The sovereign," replies Rousseau, "being formed only of the individuals that compose him, neither has nor can have interests contrary to theirs." It is true that the general will is always right when it is really general; but it may be stifled, as Rousseau admits, by private wishes, when it is formed of private cliques, of special interests, in the general community, and when the moral unity is lost. Moreover, the principle itself of Rousseau must be rejected so far as it is exclusive: one does not alienate himself entire; he alienates only a portion of himself to the community. The sovereignty of the people is nothing but the individual sovereignty multiplied by itself: the sovereignty of each one, or liberty, is limited only by the sovereignty of others, or equality. In every collective decision, human imperfection not permitting the attainment of the true expression of sovereignty by unanimity, but only the very imperfect approximation to it by a majority, individual liberty, true sovereignty, is not therefore insured, unless the rights of the majority are limited expressly by the consecration of imprescriptible individual rights,—the right to go and come, the right to labor, the right of property, the right of communicating one's thoughts to his fellows, liberty of conscience with all its consequences, and family rights.¹ Only the public safety, which can never authorize the unjust sacrifice of a human person, may legitimize the momentary suspension of certain individual rights in the extreme case, when, the country's existence being threatened

imprisonment, and censures Geneva for being too much occupied with "the authority of the people in general, and not enough with liberty."

¹ The difficulty is in the limit between these individual rights and the collective right; but this difficulty exists everywhere in the world, which is nothing but an assemblage of principles limiting each other. To cite only one example: in the matter of education, the sectarians who deny the right of the family in the name of the State, or the right of the State in the name of the family, are equally in the wrong.

from without, the normal laws of peace are suspended for the exceptional laws of defensive warfare.

The question of property offers the most important application of the principles which we have just discussed. Rousseau asserts that lawful property was born of the social contract. "By the transition from the state of nature to the civil state, . . . possession, which is merely the effect of force or the right of the first occupant, becomes property founded on a positive title." Born of society, property may, according to him, be abrogated by society, which has no right to touch the possessions of one or several citizens, but which may lawfully seize upon the possessions of all by changing the bases of the social organization, "as was done in Sparta in the days of Lycurgus."¹ Right existed before law, it may be answered: property was lawful before being legal. It is true, that, in point of fact, landed property originated among us long after society; but it might have been precisely the reverse. Suppose that a man had occupied alone, by uninterrupted cultivation, a space of ground corresponding to his needs and those of his family, would he not already have had a true right to it before any contract between him and other men? But without longer disputing the origin, even if it be admitted that the right of property was born of society, does it follow that society could abrogate it by the decision of a majority of votes? Rousseau himself tacitly retracted this assertion, the most perilous that escaped his pen. In a subsequent work, which is, in many respects, the corrective of the *Social Contract*, as the latter is that of the *Dissertation on Inequality*, the *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, he acknowledges that unanimity is requisite in order to touch the fundamental laws that are connected with the existence of the social body, while a strong majority is sufficient for the purpose of changing political forms. The fundamental law, *par excellence*, as he says in twenty places, is the law of property. Should all the citizens, therefore, except a single one, desire to put their property in common, the right of the single opponent must be respected. Moreover, unanimity itself could not change the nature of things; it might indeed modify and restrict the objects to which property is applied; it might take away the soil, for instance, but not abolish the right of property in its essence: the latter would constantly spring up anew.²

¹ See *Émile*, liv. v., more explicit than the *Contrat Social*.

² It must not be believed from the preceding that community of property was the social ideal of Rousseau. The best social state was, in his sight, that in which all had

There are rights, therefore, both of the conscience and of nature, which the sovereign cannot abolish, because they have not been instituted by him, but by another,—the eternal and absolute Sovereign; but all the laws that the sovereign has made he can unmake. Rousseau is here wholly in the right when he proclaims sovereignty inalienable. "No one is bound by engagements made with himself." This maxim of civil right is applied to the body politic as well as to individuals. The sovereign cannot impose laws which he has not a right to revoke.¹ The institution of the government is not a contract between the sovereign and his delegates. The sovereign does not contract; he decrees. A people that should promise unreservedly to obey a man would become dissolved by this act. "The instant that there is a master, there is no longer a sovereign; *and the body politic is destroyed.*"

It may be remarked that the democratic axiom of Rousseau is the counterpart of the monarchical axiom of Louis XIV. "The nation in France does not *constitute a body*: the State is the King."

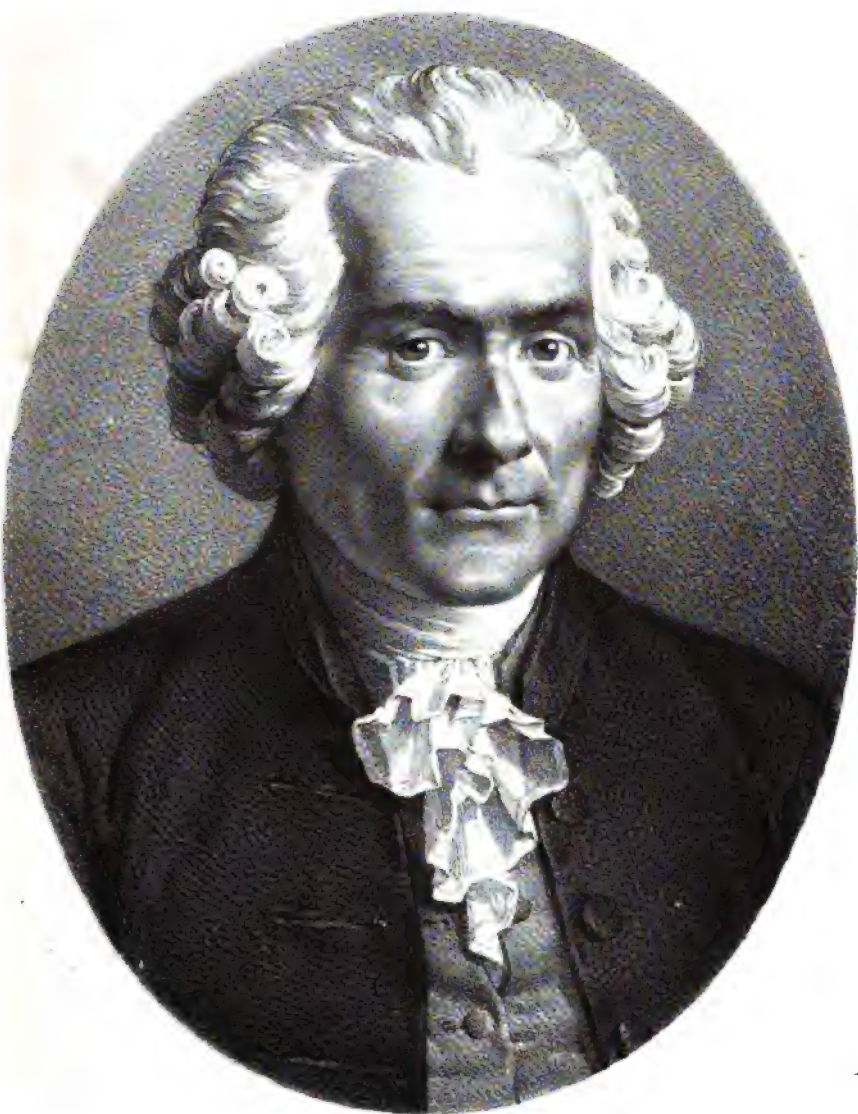
Sovereignty, continues Rousseau, is indivisible as well as inalienable. The sovereign, the people embodied, alone has power to make laws; but all the executive and administrative acts, even the right to declare war and conclude peace, not being laws or acts of sovereignty, may be delegated to magistrates. The sovereign can be represented only by himself: he cannot have representatives, but simple commissioners, to prepare the law. "All law that the people has not sanctioned in person is null and void."

Subsequently, in the *Considerations on the Government of Poland* (chap. vi.), Rousseau mitigates this absolute rigor. "The law of nature," he says, "does not permit the laws to bind any one that has not voted for them personally, *or, at least, through his representatives*;" and he admits representation, in consideration of imperative instructions and official reports. He thus becomes sufficiently practical for federative States, and there remains but a single step for him to take to include unitary States,²—to re-

something, and no one too much—a republic of small agriculturists.—*Contrat Social*, liv. i. ch. viii.

¹ The only obligatory acts of the sovereign are treaties with other sovereigns, other collective persons, his peers.

² Too full of the ideal of the antique city, he does not seem to have taken this step: at least he admits with great difficulty the existence of a great free State, only on condition that it shall have no capital. The remains of his former Utopia agree with the too real evils before his eyes to make him execrate Paris and all great cities. The



J. J. ROUSSEAU,

d'après le buste de M^r Houdon.

Martin del.

Lich de Villain.

ABTORY, LKNOX
TILDEY FOUNDRY

place the imperative instructions, which are contrary to the nature of these States, by frequent elections, which bring the representative before those represented, and give the latter the indirect means of sanctioning or disavowing the law.

The principle of sovereignty, he continues, is everywhere the same. Those who have sought to make a distinction between different kinds of sovereignty, have confounded sovereignty, which is a unit, with governments, which may and should differ according to times and places. The government is not the sovereign: it is only the minister of the sovereign. There is but a single good government possible for a people at one moment; but different governments may be suited to the same people at different times.

The republic is a State in which the sovereign, the people embodied, preserves its rights, and which is regulated by laws, whatever may be the form of administration.

The law being the general act by which the whole people decrees concerning the whole people, it tacitly follows, from this definition, that France had no laws, since the sovereign was not consulted thereon, but was only ruled by the decrees of an hereditary magistrate, who had usurped the exercise of the sovereignty, the legislative power.¹

The definition of the republic, according to Rousseau, excludes no form of executive power, not even the hereditary monarchical form, with the reservation of the inalienable right of the people to remove their first magistrate: nevertheless, the monarchical republic, and the hereditary, aristocratic republic, are not good republics in his sight, as he judges the liberty of the people and the hereditability of the leaders incompatible.

It has been pretended that Rousseau admitted no lawful government but pure democracy: we have just shown that this was

contrast between the luxury of the capital and the wretchedness of the country was then even more shocking than in our days, and rendered his anger too excusable. The federative republic remained his ideal. He left a plan of federal government which a Count d'Entraigues, to whom he had intrusted it, audaciously destroyed in 1789, for fear that this work might be injurious to the monarchy. It is to be remarked that the disciples of Rousseau became for the most part, in the republic, the most violent adversaries of federalism and the supporters of the republic one and indivisible.

¹ He had at first considered England itself as not having true laws. "The English nation," he says, "is free only during the election of the members of Parliament: as soon as the election is finished, it becomes a slave again."—*Contrat Social*, liv. iii. ch. xv. He disavows this exaggeration in the *Lettres de la Montagne* and the *Gouvernement de Pologne*; and, while considering England very remote from the political ideal, he would not absolutely condemn this constitution, in which two hereditary elements hold each other in check, and in which the elective element opens and shuts the public treasury, if the elections were annual, and the suffrage universal.

the Mountain, were the last gush. Rousseau resolved to publish nothing more during his life, but, happily, not to write nothing more. He believed that he had paid his debt to his contemporaries, and projected employing his last years in a work without a model, at least among moderns; and which would serve as moral proofs of his works and commentaries upon them before posterity.

He would have gladly ended his life in contemplation and peaceful revery in the recesses of the valleys of the Jura, or on some solitary island of the lakes of Roman Switzerland. His unworthy companion did not permit him to realize his wishes. Thérèse, who was weary of solitude, took advantage of the distrustful disposition of his wounded soul to make him believe in imaginary dangers,—in a persecution on the part of Protestant bigots. He quitted the country, with a broken heart, and a mind beset with a dark melancholy. He determined to accept the offers of the Scotch philosopher Hume, and to settle in England, despite the little sympathy with which the English people inspired him. He passed through France under the ban of the decree of the parliament; and the welcome which he received at Strasburg, then at Paris, was calculated to revive his affection for the French. The minister Choiseul, who neither wished to support him nor to cause his arrest, obliged him to hasten his departure. He crossed the Channel in January, 1766.

The fatal issue of this journey is well known. Rousseau was condemned to pass through three degrees of suffering,—after private sorrows, public persecution; after real persecution, imaginary evils, the most cruel of all. Perhaps the climate of England, that foggy land of spleen, contributed to induce the outbreak of the hypochondria which had been already prognosticated by many symptoms not understood. The moral malady that attacked Jean-Jacques manifested itself under a form which may be styled the mania of distrust. A few thoughtless acts of Hume were transformed, in the mind of the exile, into a plot to destroy and dishonor him. Hume, astonished and indignant, hastened, without more examination, to denounce Rousseau as a monster of ingratitude, and found only too many echoes among the former friends of the author of *Émile*, who would have pardoned Rousseau his fame, but who did not pardon him his principles. They confounded him with the defenders of *superstitions*, and called him *the deserter of philosophy*, at the moment when he was saving philosophy. Voltaire, at first touched by Rousseau's misfortunes, then strengthened in his aversion by some attacks of the *Letters*



Engraved by W. Hill

DAVID HUME.

*From a Bust by L. Smith after
a Statue by Allan Ramsay*



from the *Mountain*, joined the atheistic party in overthrowing him, with all the impetuosity of his character. The unhappy Jean-Jacques saw a league formed against him, which was too real, but which his imagination swelled to gigantic and impossible proportions. He fancied himself to be surrounded with a universal conspiracy, into which his enemies had drawn the whole contemporaneous generation, to degrade his character, and blight his memory before posterity. Far from exaggerating his influence, he exaggerated his isolation in the midst of his age; he did not hear the numerous echoes that replied to his voice, or believed them deceitful and scoffing;¹ he disbelieved the sincerity of the greater part of the ardent disciples that flocked to him; and did not taste the highest consolation, to a heart like his, of enjoying the good that he had done to men.² This was, doubtless, a harsh expiation of the faults that he might have committed in this world.

On his return to France (1767), where the decree which remained standing against him was neither revoked nor applied, and where the government no longer thought of molesting him, he lived three years in the country under an assumed name; then returned openly to Paris to justify himself in person against the imputations of his enemies, and to contend against what he termed

¹ On his return from England, Amiens gave him a triumphal reception: the municipal authorities wished to send him *the wine of the city*. He was touched at first; then, on reflecting upon this welcome, he imagined that they had derided him.

² The origin of the melancholy of Jean-Jacques dated far back. His former friends, become his enemies, cited, as proofs of selfishness, ingratitude, falsity, and lying exaggeration, many incidents which only indicate the over-excitement of a soul placed outside the ordinary relations of life, and incapable of judging them in the common point of view. What would a being whose senses were ten times more delicate and irritable than ours do and experience in the midst of the physical world in which we live? He would endure continual and insupportable sufferings: the least ray of light would dazzle his eyes; the least touch would agitate all his nerves. Such was Rousseau in the moral world. If his sensibility had been restrained and moderated by a different education, he would have still been unhappy (beings too powerfully endowed with passion and ideality are necessarily unhappy here on earth); but he would have only felt great and inevitable sorrows, and would not have been tortured by those fantastic miseries of momentary recurrence which ended by irrevocably destroying the balance of his faculties. A touching letter, of March, 1768, attests that he had at times the consciousness of this abnormal situation. "Whatever affection may happen to my brain, my heart will always remain the same." Later, he acknowledged to a friend, Corancez, who has left us the best account that we possess of his last years, that he had quitted England in a veritable fit of madness. Believing himself pursued in England by the agents of the minister Choiseul, it was in France that he took refuge! This mental crisis cost posterity an edition of *Emile* revised and enlarged, together with a work on public education. Rousseau burned the manuscript in a transport of causeless fear. Physical sufferings of the kind best fitted to affect the nervous system, and continued sleeplessness, had coöperated with moral causes to induce hypochondria.

the *great plot*; bringing with him the documents of the suit destined for future generations,—the manuscript of the *Confessions*. The morbid state which disturbed the rectitude of his judgment concerning particular things, while leaving him the most admirable lucidity concerning things in general, and the resolution to show himself unveiled, to tell every thing, thoughts and words, actions and relations, executed to the letter, explain and excuse, without justifying, the few useless and repulsive details that offend decency and good taste, — the revelations of the weaknesses of others; the complaisance with which the imagination of the penitent revives the remembrance of errors which the conscience disavows; and, lastly, that pride which exalts itself, under the oppression of misfortune and human injustice, so far as to defy before God any of his fellow-creatures to dare to call themselves better than he.¹ There would be temerity in undertaking to characterize, in a literary point of view, the inconceivable magic of this creation in which Rousseau is at once the poet and the poem. No one had ever written, no one perhaps will ever write, such *Memoirs*!

We will return again to Rousseau in his last days. We have seen his works and his life. We are about to ascertain the effects of his words; at least, the immediate effects which they produced on his contemporaries: for the ulterior consequences of these words would far exceed the limits of our history; they would exceed the generation in which we live. The action of Rousseau on France and on the world is not yet ended.

¹It must, however, be observed, that he says *better*, and not *more virtuous*, which is quite different. It is too much forgotten that Rousseau forbade the publication of his *Memoirs* before the beginning of the nineteenth century; an epoch at which he had reason to believe that all his contemporaries would have disappeared. The family of Madame de Warens was completely extinct as early as 1745, and the systematic weaknesses of this strange woman had been in some sort public at Chambery.

CHAPTER III.

THE PHILOSOPHERS. (CONTINUED.)

ROUSSEAU AND THE PHILOSOPHERS. THE ECONOMISTS. Rousseau's Influence upon Writers. Voltaire modified by Rousseau. Reforms demanded by Voltaire. Voltaire and the Parliaments. Calas. Resistance of Materialistic Philosophy. Atheistic Propaganda of D'Holbach. Communism. Morelli. Mabli: his Political and Social Ideas. Rousseau's Influence on Manners and Arts. Grétri. Gluck. Louis David. Political Economy. PHYSIOCRATS. Quesnai. Gournai. Turgot, the Economist and Philosopher.

1762-1774.

WE have attempted to describe the state of society before the coming of the philosophers, then the reign of the philosophers before the advent of Rousseau: a third period opens from the date of *Julie*, *Émile*, and the *Social Contract*. Before describing the effects upon society, upon the public, of this brilliant apparition, it is necessary to show its influence upon those very persons who were accustomed to lead public opinion,—the writers. Rousseau had fallen amidst them like a blazing projectile.

The effects produced by Rousseau on the philosophic phalanx were very different, very opposite even, but very powerful. The oscillations and modifications of the soul of Voltaire follow each other upon every page of his writings. At the very time when he expressed an increasing ill will against the person of the author of *Émile* and certain of his ideas, he was irresistibly attracted to the principal doctrines of Rousseau: he entered, as if despite himself, into paths towards which his steps were never before directed. One would say that it was to revenge himself for this salutary violence that he pursued Rousseau with blind anger. Under this passionate agitation, there was, however, a logical development in the changes wrought in Voltaire. It was not the same with Diderot, the greatest, the only great one, of the encyclopedic sect: in him the fluctuations and contradictions were redoubled. In the main body of the materialistic battalion, there were no contradictions; there was the logic of mediocrity: men vied with each other in exceeding the Atheism of the past through

the spirit of reaction. The patriarch of Ferney still had the nominal supremacy over the encyclopedic army ; but this army was undisciplined : it always obeyed when it was in question to attack either positive religion or the person of Rousseau, and also, it must be acknowledged, to defend humanity ; but, when the leader wished to spare Rousseau's ideas or to maintain his own Deism, his subordinates refused obedience. The religious or metaphysical ideas of Rousseau were here alone in question : as to his political ideas, all felt their influence to a very high degree ; only some restricted, while others falsified or exaggerated them.

The advent and invasion of Rousseau determined therefore, in Voltaire's life, a third very fruitful phase, which it is most essential to study. In the first phase, Voltaire had had, for the foundation and support of his philosophy, the optimism of Bolingbroke. In the second, he had lost this support, without finding any other. In the third, strengthened by an assistance which he did not acknowledge, and fired by an emulation which he disguised from himself, he assimilated in part with the views of his illustrious and unhappy rival, and at the same time revived, and developed with well-sustained energy, all his own aspirations, all the ideas which rose spontaneously from the nature of his mind. The aged tree put forth anew with a wonderful power of rejuvenescence, and bore new fruits, which would perhaps have withered in the germ, had it not been for the beneficent blast which had swept over them.

An anonymous political work, the *Republican Ideas, by a Citizen of Geneva*, was the first echo of Rousseau in Voltaire. He harshly assailed the *Social Contract* ; refuted it justly on some points, and wrongly on others, in which he did not understand Rousseau's true ideas, but, at the bottom, submitted to it while completing it by this great principle : " In a republic worthy of the name, the liberty of publishing his thoughts is the natural right of the citizen." To Voltaire, therefore, seems to belong the honor of having clearly formulated the liberty of the press as a fundamental right. He opposed, in the name of liberty, the sumptuary laws recommended by Rousseau ; he blamed, like him, " the odious and humiliating distinction between the nobles and those not of noble birth." He had accepted the sovereignty of the people by affirming that " civil government is the will of all, executed by a single one or by several in virtue of the laws which all have enacted." But he restricted this participation of all by a singular definition of the community. " A community being composed of several houses and several pieces of ground attached

to them, it is improbable that a single man would be the master of these houses and grounds; and it is natural that each master should have a voice with respect to the good of the community. Should those who have neither house nor land in this community have a voice with respect to it? They have no more right to this than a clerk hired by merchants would have to regulate their trade; but they may be made partners."

Behold monarchy and democracy, therefore, disowned together in behalf of the republic of landed property! — society composed of houses and lands! . . . Rousseau thought society composed of men. We may see here the germ of those equivocal opinions, which, while abstractly recognizing the sovereignty of the people, systematically¹ exclude the lower classes from political rights, without alleging the motive of this exclusion as bluntly as Voltaire.

Despite this denial of the right of those who were not land-holders,² Voltaire, returning to the sentiments which had formerly inspired him in *Brutus* and the *Death of Cæsar*, and which he had appeared to forget for the exclusive warfare against *fanaticism*, thenceforth uttered republican maxims on many occasions. He had said, in the *Ideas of a Citizen of Geneva*, that "the republican is the most tolerable of all governments, because it is that which assimilates men most closely to natural equality." He recurred to this in the article DEMOCRACY of that *Philosophical Dictionary* by which he undertook to make up for the reticences of the *Encyclopædia*, and frankly to give the final solution concerning all kinds of subjects. "The people," he said, like Rousseau, "never desire, and never can desire, any thing but liberty and equality." He sets the crimes of monarchies in opposition to the much rarer crimes of republics. The article *Politics* of the same *Dictionary* contains a very vivid and clever allegory on the end of monarchies, — on the too harshly treated workmen, that finally expel the master. "All that I see," he says in a letter of April 2, 1764, "is sowing the seeds of a revolution which will inevitably come, but which I shall not have the pleasure of witnessing. The French arrive late at every thing; but they arrive at last. Enlightenment is becoming so widely diffused, that they will break

¹ We say *systematically*; for it is possible to admit the principle of universal suffrage, without believing it immediately applicable to all people in every state of society.

² Not only the common people, but capitalists and manufacturers, who are not landed proprietors.

out on the first occasion, and then there will be a charming uproar. The young men are happy : they will see fine things."

Those *fine things* of which Voltaire spoke so lightly would have inspired him with as much terror as admiration, had he been permitted to be a spectator of them. It was not in this tone that Rousseau had announced the great subversion that was in the course of preparation.

Voltaire did not always pique himself on being consistent. By the side of the republican and revolutionist, the large landed proprietor and lord of the manor broke out at times in an almost feudal caprice. "The pretended equality of men is a pernicious chimera. If there were not thirty laborers to one master, the earth would not be cultivated. I have established schools on my estates ; but I distrust them." — *Art. Fertilization*.

These seigniorial fancies arrested him but little. In spite of his levity and inconsistency, he continually advanced : his ardor and activity seemed to increase with years. Rousseau had especially laid down general principles and appealed to general sentiments. Voltaire, on his side, after having so long carried on a general criticism, set about demanding reforms, some positive, others definite, and others partial, but all emanating from the same source, and tending to the same end, — the progress of humanity in the laws and the emancipation of secular society.

A young Milanese, the Marquis Beccaria, had just published, with great éclat, the *Treatise on Offences and Punishments*, the reflex of that French thought which was rapidly invading Europe.¹ Voltaire warmly welcomed and commented upon this work, which summed up, if not with profundity, at least with the truest warmth and the most sympathetic candor, all the aspirations of modern philanthropy to a more humane and juster system of legislation (1766). The experience of the aged man did not follow the youth in all his flights. Voltaire did not believe the penalty of death *absolutely* unlawful,² like Beccaria ; but he entreated legislators to render its application as rare as possible, and to employ criminals in general upon the public works. There should be no capital punishment, he said, until after a reëxamination of the

¹ The book of Beccaria was translated and greatly changed by the Abbé Morellet, an economist and deistical philosopher, who had just published, in 1762, the *Manuel des Inquisiteurs* ; thus dragging the monster of the Inquisition from his cave to hold him up to universal abhorrence.

² It is to be remarked that this opinion of Beccaria, which has since been so often echoed, was professed by none of the great geniuses of the eighteenth century.

trial in the council of the Prince. This was done in England and Germany, and was formerly done in France. The *question*, above all, the *preliminary question*, should no longer be employed. England had long since abolished it, and other States were successfully following her example.¹ Robbery by servants should no longer be punished with death, and the property of those condemned should no longer be confiscated. This was not done in the greater part of the provinces under the Roman law; neither in Bourbonnais, Berry, Maine, Poitou, nor Brittany. Voltaire attacked all the legal penalties dictated by fanaticism, the penalties against heretics, the atrocious tortures of those guilty of sacrilege, and the revolting execution of the corpses of those who had committed suicide; and casually introduced a note on an abuse foreign to legal punishment, but still more odious to humanity,—the infamous mutilation of the *Soprani* for the use of the Papal chapel. He compared our secret trials, copied from the Inquisition under François I., with the public trials of the Romans, and protested against the harsh treatment inflicted on the accused, and the injustice of granting counsel to those charged with simple misdemeanors, and refusing it to those charged with crimes. He showed that the *Criminal Ordinance* of 1670, which had greatly aggravated that of 1539, and which was the only uniform law for the whole kingdom, seemed, in many respects, to have for its aim the destruction of the accused, and not the discovery of the truth. He was indignant because the accused proved innocent was indemnified neither for his captivity nor his sufferings (after sixty years of revolution, he would still have cause for indignation). He stigmatized the vendibility of judicial office, which existed nowhere but in France; and expressed his desire for the uniformity of jurisprudence, then of legislation.²

Elsewhere, he eulogized the English jury,—the trial of the citizen by his peers. He had, as early as 1742, lauded the institution of justices of the peace, established in Holland.

As to his other great object, the enfranchisement of civil society,

¹ Russia, Austria, Prussia, and Hesse. In Russia, the reformation was not serious; the knout easily replacing the classic instruments of torture.

² To appreciate what was due to Voltaire and his devoted auxiliaries, we must remember where the most eminent among the law-makers had stood a few years before: for instance, D'Aguesseau, admitting the utility of the rack, and causing the renewal of those barbarous ordinances of the sixteenth century which condemned to death those guilty of *rape by seduction*, without distinction of sex; that is, which threatened with torture a young girl who had suffered a minor to marry her against the wishes of his parents (December 1, 1730). — *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXII. p. 338.

he recurred to it unceasingly in the *Philosophical Dictionary* and everywhere. He affirmed that it belonged to the State to support the ministers of religion, reserving the right of disposing of the superfluous ecclesiastical property, should there be any;¹ and that religious orders, having foreign superiors, should not be tolerated. He demanded that the secular authority should no longer interfere to enforce the observance of Lent and the abstinence from labor on feast-days. Marriage, as to its civil results, and so far as it was a contract, wills and burials, should belong to the domain of pure civil law. Separation between husbands and wives, without the power to marry again, he regarded as contrary to morality and good order.

He also instigated reforms in other matters of all kinds; in questions of municipal government and public hygiene, as the return to the ancient usage of removing cemeteries beyond the limits of cities; and in educational questions, as the introduction of historical and mathematical studies into colleges.

It suffices to sum up the propositions of Voltaire to signalize their importance. The greater part of his *desiderata* have become the laws of modern France. A few of the improvements which he solicited are yet to be established or *restored*. On the ground of civil reforms, he trod with the firmest and surest step: nothing equalled the accuracy of his perception.

The religious question is not so simply or easily judged. Here two inverse tendencies were manifested in Voltaire, — on the one hand, he became strengthened in Deism, and reconciled to the necessary beliefs which he had rejected; on the other, as if to win pardon for his *natural religion* from the materialists, he redoubled his fury against positive religion and the Bible. He did not content himself with seconding the warfare of Rousseau against the Roman religion, — a religion, he said, which, “choosing a head outside of the State, is necessarily at public or secret war with the State; a malady which must be cured by degrees by abolishing the shameful taxes paid to the Bishop of Rome, diminishing the number of convents, and suppressing, in the course of time, the fraternities, penitents, and false relics.”² The famous watch-

¹ To judge of this system, it must be compared, not with the theory which throws the support of religious worship upon the free contribution of private individuals, but with the state of affairs when the Catholic clergy possessed a very large part of the soil of France, and tithes to the amount of ninety millions on the rest.

² *Idées de Lamoignon-le-Vayer*. Among the defenders of the Bible and tradition, scarcely any can be cited but the Abbé Guénée, a man of wit, who employed good taste in

word, *Down with hell!* no longer threatened only fanaticism and superstition, but involved all Christianity, which Voltaire confounded with the Christian sects: he no longer even distinguished morality from dogmas; he trampled under foot the sentiments most worthy of respect, and stigmatized the most touching and the holiest traditions with a license which reminds us but too well of the author of the *Maid of Orleans*.

The excuse for such excesses, if any excuse can extenuate the blame, is the crimes by which humiliated fanaticism was striving to revenge its defeat and regain its sway. From 1762 to 1766, the old stereotyped and pitiless spirit of the courts of justice hurled defiance at the spirit of the age by a series of judicial atrocities well adapted to hurry beyond all bounds a passionate and impulsive man like Voltaire. Bigoted and frenzied minorities imposed their rule in the parliaments on wavering or sceptical majorities, and obliged them, as a compensation for the deadly warfare which the magistracy was waging at that moment against the Jesuits, to ransack the arsenal of the old laws, full of instruments of extermination, "in order to avenge religion on the heretics and the infidels." February 19, 1762, the Protestant pastor Rochette was hung, by the sentence of the parliament of Toulouse, for having exercised the evangelical ministry in Languedoc. Three young Protestant gentlemen, the brothers Grenier, were decapitated at the same time, under the pretext of rebellion, for having taken up arms at a moment when they feared being slaughtered by the Catholics, who had been roused by the sound of the tocsin on the occasion of the arrest of Rochette. March 9, 1762, another Toulouse Protestant, the merchant Calas, expired on the wheel. The parliament of Toulouse had condemned him as the assassin of his own son, who, from all appearances, had committed suicide. According to a fable borrowed by the parliaments from the gross credulity of the fraternities of penitents, Calas had killed his son to prevent him from becoming a Catholic. The widow and children of the victim, after themselves enduring the horrors of the *question*, took refuge at Geneva, and implored the pity of Voltaire. The rest is known. History cannot have too much praise for the magnanimity with which this old man, already the butt of all the clergy of Europe, dared to enter into open strife with this so-much dreaded magistracy, and forced it to recoil

erudition, and urbanity in polemics. His *Lettres de quelques Juifs*, etc., was almost the only book of talent written against Voltaire.

before him. He knew how to employ all weapons, even that of moderation, to persuade and convert the public, the bar, and the court at last. He obtained, after execution, the application of that principle of reëxamination which he demanded theoretically between condemnation and execution. An extraordinary tribunal of fifty masters of requests quashed the decree of the parliament of Toulouse, rehabilitated the memory of Calas, and prescribed the indemnification of his family (March 9, 1765). Never had truth and justice won a more brilliant or more difficult victory.

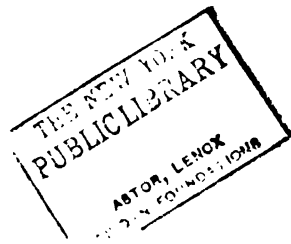
In the very year of the punishment of Calas, the same abominations had been well-nigh repeated in the same place. A young Protestant girl had been taken from her parents, according to the ordinances still in force, and shut up in a convent in order to force her to change her religion, or to *instruct her*, as it was said. She escaped, and perished by accident in her flight. The father, named Sirven, was accused of the same crime as Calas: he fled, with his wife and remaining daughter, through the snows of the Cévennes. The wife died of want and grief: the father and daughter rejoined the Calas family at Geneva. They found there the same protection, while they were condemned as contumacious at Toulouse: but their case was not so promptly settled; and, before their innocence had been judicially recognized, the parliaments had fallen.

They had first had time to sully themselves with new crimes. In 1766, a crucifix placed on a bridge at Abbeville having been mutilated during the night, the Bishop of Amiens clamored for vengeance. Two young officers of eighteen, La Barre and D'Étallonde, were accused of the sacrilege. D'Étallonde fled: La Barre was condemned by the presidial court of Abbeville, on vague presumptions, to be burned alive, after having his tongue cut out, and his right hand struck off. An appeal was made to the Parliament of Paris. The parliament confirmed the sentence, granting to the accused the favor of being decapitated! This time, Voltaire failed. La Barre's head fell July 1, 1766. The tribunals seemed struck with madness, even when passions or religious interests were not at stake. Voltaire, as we have said elsewhere, succeeded no better in wresting from them a more eminent victim, — the Count de Lally; but he paved the way for the rehabilitation of this unhappy general, and saved the life or honor of several other accused, who were on the point of succumbing beneath unjust prejudices: he seemed to aspire to constitute himself the redress-



Engraved by W. L. Smith

St. Michael's



er of all those errors and judicial acts of iniquity which so well proved the necessity of the reforms that he invoked.

He thus practised the gospel in fact while attacking it in name.

At the same time, his Deism took a more and more precise and providential character. He forcibly declared himself in favor of final causes, and opposed to naturalism. "I see in nature, as in the arts, only final causes. There is no nature; there is nothing but art." He means that God is the great Artist, and the world a work of art. (*Phil. Dict.*, art. GOD, — NATURE). He set up Spinoza himself in opposition to materialistic naturalism: it was the beginning of justice to this great man, mistaken even by Rousseau. On approaching the threshold of the future life, he inclined at last to the immortality of the soul. He admitted the possibility in us "of that indestructible monad which thinks and feels," so often the butt of his raillery. "Let us hope that our monad, which reasons upon the great Eternal Being, may be happy through this very Being."¹ He acknowledged, that, wherever there is an established society, a religion (he does not say a *religion of State*) is necessary, provided that the form of worship is simple, and the priesthood without superstition. "The laws watch over known, and religion over secret crimes." Novels and poetry, which he had often employed for aggressive criticism, became weapons in favor of his faith in Providence.² His voice rose, like his thought, in virile and proud epistles, the fruit of the inexhaustible inspiration of his last years.

"I dare act without fearing any thing; so dare I write."

The avenger of Calas could render to himself this noble testimony: —

"It is our hope, that, one day, all will be well:
It is our delusion that all is well to-day."

It was thus that he corrected, in the new editions, the sad conclusion of the *Disaster of Lisbon*.

His final conclusion was an act of faith in favor of the religion of progress: —

"Whether every thing is good or bad, let us act so that it may better."

¹ As early as 1758, immediately after *Candide*, he had discerned the true solution of the question of optimism. "It is the eternity to come that justifies optimism, and not the present moment," he wrote to a pastor of Geneva, summing up what Rousseau had written to him. But he had little feeling of this *eternity to come* at that epoch.

² See the *Hist. de Jemmy*; the *Épître à l'auteur des Trois Imposteurs*; the *Épître à Boileau*.

It was against his usual allies that all these darts were aimed: it was against their Atheism that he protested in engraving on the fronton of the church at Ferney the famous inscription, *Deo erexit Voltaire*, in which it has been erroneously sought to discover the revelation of audacious pride.¹

He hesitated long before waging a direct war on their works: the compact against the common enemy restrained him. They themselves, moreover, despite the fanatical anger which the attack of Rousseau had excited among them, ventured only by degrees to teach dogmatically in their books the doctrines which they had professed for so many years in their drawing-rooms. They must have felt the old world more and more shaken, and believed the power of their sect singularly increased. They needed, most of all, a strongly organized centre of action. D'Alembert was too prudent and too sceptical to create this centre: Diderot, too mobile, and also too clear-sighted, had not a firm enough faith in annihilation, and at times perceived the impossibility of an atheistic society. A man of less scope, but who joined to a passionate perseverance the conditions of fortune and position necessary to act on a large scale, took this part, — the Baron d'Holbach, a German settled in France, well instructed in the natural sciences, to the advancement of which he had been able to contribute by original views, but who made his physics only the support of a bad system of metaphysics. D'Holbach assembled around him, and set to work, men of unequal learning and talent, but associated by a like thirst for destruction and a like sincerity in their negative fanaticism. He possessed himself of Diderot, not exclusively, but at least as far as it was possible to seize upon this Proteus whom no one ever chained. The fiery director of the *Encyclopædia* wrote at once, for himself and his friends, deistical and atheistical books, — the *Additions to the Philosophical Thoughts*, and the *Treatise on the Sufficiency of Natural Religion* (1770). Still other productions of Diderot might have been acknowledged by Voltaire, if not by Rousseau himself. The *Philosophical History of the Two Indies*, by the Abbé Rainal (1770), which owed to

¹ It is to be regretted that this remembrance should be marred by the scenes, some puerile, others blameworthy, which transpired at Ferney, where Voltaire amused himself by becoming affiliated to the third order of St. Francis; pretended to receive the communion from the hands of his curate, like a good lord of the manor, despite the opposition of his bishop; and signed, to this effect, a Catholic confession of faith, in order to screen himself from the French tribunals. Rousseau did not trifle with such things!

Diderot its most highly colored pages,¹ was also a deistical work. But, meanwhile, Diderot sketched cynical fancies on his own account, and lavished his fire on the materialistic lucubrations of D'Holbach, his auxiliary Naigeon, and Helvetius, as on that correspondence by which Grimm amused seven or eight foreign princes with the panorama presented by literary and philosophic France: inexhaustible and indefatigable, he wrote almost every thing of superiority in the books of his friends, — a strange man, who cannot be accused of bad faith, but who had the perilous gift of becoming enamoured in an artistic point of view with contradictory ideas, according as they succeeded to the surface of his mind.

A multitude of aggressive books issued from the secret laboratory of D'Holbach, in order to go to Holland to be printed; then to return to be burned in France, where the flames were no longer any thing but a means of propagation.² These were reputed to be the posthumous works of divers scholars or academicians, who, it was said, had not dared to reveal their thoughts during their lifetime: the principal ones were ascribed to the most profound scholar of the age, Nicolas Fréret, who had died in 1749. The first of these works being especially directed against the revealed dogmas, Voltaire approved them, despite their suspicious tendencies. A learned and laborious, but heavy theologian, who defended the old maxims of intolerance with the dogmas of Christianity, — the Abbé Bergier, — replied to one of these books, the *Critical Examination of the Apologists of Christianity*, by the *Certainty of the Proofs of Christianity*; to which a new champion replied by the *Certainty of the Proofs of Mahometanism*. The latter, a Gallicized German like D'Holbach and Grimm, was that Clootz, afterwards celebrated in the Revolution under the name of Anacharsis, a disciple of Diderot, who was destined to fall under the blows of the disciples of Rousseau when ideas became swords.

The *System of Nature* at last removed all disguise (1770): it was the theory, magisterially set forth, of that materialistic naturalism insinuated in the *Interpretation of Nature*, and some other previous works of Diderot, and refuted by Rousseau. At this stroke, Voltaire broke forth. For the first time, he publicly con-

¹ The vast work of Rainal, too much lauded formerly, and too much disdained at the present time, is diffuse, declamatory, and sometimes inconsistent, but full of facts, and animated with a sincere earnestness.

² Twenty-five or thirty were burned in 1770. — See the curious report on Fréret, to the Academy of Inscriptions, by M. Walckenaër.

demned a production emanating from the philosophical fraternity, and found himself ranged, willing or unwilling, by the side of the author of *Émile*.

These same books, so hostile to the religion of Rousseau, felt the influence of his politics, while setting out from principles so different. Rousseau having condemned all monarchical or aristocratic institutions which disregarded the rights of the people, it was necessary to find means of surpassing him. He had given reasons: they resorted to declamations.¹ There was a rival clamor against despotism, the diapason of which continued to increase till it reached the savage distich of Diderot: —

“And my hand will rend the entrails of the priest,
In default of a rope to strangle the kings!”

A dithyrambic frenzy, which did not prevent the *tyrannicide* Diderot from professing a naïve admiration for Catharine II., the philosopher-Empress, whom he went to Russia to visit, and who loaded him with calculated caresses and benefactions.

We meet in a posthumous work of Diderot (the *Politics of Sovereigns*, written in 1774, but not published until 1798) passages more serious and reflective than this savage sally of a philosophic supper.

“Under any government whatsoever, the only means of being free is for all to be soldiers. In each condition, it is necessary for the citizen to have two dresses, — the dress of his vocation, and the military dress.”

This was the announcement of the institution of the National Guard.

“There are no effective remonstrances but those which are made with the bayonet at the end of the musket.”

And, lastly, that terrible saying, which contained a lugubrious prophecy, —

“THE PUBLIC PUNISHMENT OF A KING CHANGES THE SPIRIT OF A NATION FOREVER.”

It was the substitution of revolutionary reasons of State for monarchical and catholic reasons of State. Rousseau would have said at least, “The punishment of a *guilty* king.”

The distich was not published, any more than the axioms; and

¹ Not that there are not in these books “some true principles of public right and liberty,” as is acknowledged by an historian who cannot be suspected of favoring materialism, M. Villemain; but these principles, devoid of consistency and authority, could not constitute a doctrine.

Catharine, moreover, esteemed her *moujiks* in little danger from the preachings of the French propaganda. Another monarch judged them less inoffensive, — Frederick II. He seconded his old friend Voltaire, and composed a refutation of the *System of Nature* from the stand-point of Deism, and even of free-will, which he had formerly opposed. It was well to interfere thus as a philosopher, and not as a king; but it may be guaranteed, that, at the bottom, the king had been more deeply wounded than the philosopher by a book which claimed the right of subjects to depose their princes, and the abolition of the great armies which support the thrones. Frederick had already found himself far outstripped by Rousseau; although he himself had appeared to assert, in a theoretical work, the superiority of the republic over the monarchy.¹ He who had so noisily commenced the philosophic revolution among the crowned heads well-nigh commenced the reaction; or at least he paused, if he did not draw back, while the movement extended to the courts of Russia and Italy, Austria and Spain, and the court of Rome itself!

The movement in the courts could extend only within certain limits; but the writers had exceeded all bounds: after particular religions, they had attacked natural religion; after the transient forms of society, they attacked its foundation. A book, the *Code of Nature*, which has been attributed to Diderot, although his ideas are not found therein any more than his style, denounced property, no longer as allied to society substituted for savage independence, but as having overthrown the true system of society, *communism*, the providential law of human sociability. The true author, who lived in great obscurity, was named Morelli. He was a solitary dreamer, far removed from all practical sense, as is attested by the simplicity of his book; but the scope of this book greatly exceeds its intrinsic value, although every thing in it is not to be despised. It is the starting-point of Babeuvism, of modern communism, and all the systems founded exclusively upon the principle of fraternity. The communist theory, the successor of the Franciscans of the Middle Ages and the Utopian philosophers of the sixteenth century, did not proceed from materialism, although it had power to become a formidable scourge by combining with it. Morelli was religious: he professed the providential perfectibility of the physical and moral worlds; he laid down as the principle of all moral development the sentiment of our indi-

¹ He gives a very remarkable reason for this; namely, that there is more consistency and unity in the policy of republics.

vidual insufficiency ; of the need that we have of others, and consequently of *beneficence* ; and showed the idea of *beneficence*, of goodness, raised to the highest degree, awakening in us the notion of the Divinity rather and more surely than the spectacle of the universe itself. He greatly eulogized primitive Christianity, and discerned very clearly that the tendency to communism existed therein, but saw less clearly why it had ceased to exist. The tendency to absolute unity and social equality is an inevitable reaction of the human mind in the decline of civilization, where extreme inequality is associated with extreme corruption ; but this tendency is moderated and counterbalanced by other forces when society becomes reëstablished. The Christians would have abandoned the system of communism, even if the Church had not deviated from the evangelical spirit, as Morelli reproaches it for doing.

The reason is, that liberty, the free disposal of one's self, the most unconquerable of all the wants of man, and the great motive power of all progress and all activity, is incompatible with that universal system of regulation in which communism necessarily ends, and which was already completely formulated in the *Code* of Morelli, in which was found, almost in the very terms, the famous axiom, *from each according to his faculties, to each according to his needs* ; an ideal to which it is quite right to aspire, but which cannot be made a positive law, an executory law, without annihilating all personality under the despotism of the magistrate. The doctrine is also found therein, that all evil arises from the existing institutions of society, and that all evil would disappear if the social institutions were reformed ; a doctrine which abolishes individual responsibility, and differs totally from that of Rousseau : the author of *Émile* wished to reform men in order to reform society. Again : it is endeavored therein to combine the abolition of all property with the maintenance of social progress in the arts, sciences, pleasures, and conveniences of life, and also with the maintenance of the family. Morelli even causes all grades of society to be ruled by heads of families ; and, if he admits of divorce, it is not without harsh restrictions.

The transition is natural from Morelli to an intermediate philosopher between him and Rousseau, and who, almost as devoid of literary talent as the author of the *Code of Nature*, elevated himself to a high renown by mere strength of thought, and, above all, of character. The Abbé de Mably,¹ the rival and not the disciple of Rousseau, advancing side by side with the *citizen*

¹ The brother of Condillac, born in 1710.

of Geneva, seconded him against materialism and monarchy, completed him on certain points, and exaggerated, restricted, or falsified him on others. He had begun his career, as early as 1740, by a book in which he extolled the lustre of modern civilization, and set the society of his time above the ancients. His idea became voluntarily and conscientiously transformed. He published two works on the public law of Europe, and aspired to found international policy upon morality and justice. To be consistent, moreover, he quitted active diplomacy, in which he had had prospects of success (1748-1757). His *Observations on the Greeks and Romans* (1749-1751) taught maxims concerning simplicity, poverty, and rigid morals, which had been those of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, and which were becoming those of Rousseau. We remark therein the axiom, "Equality is the only solid principle of liberty." In 1758, he wrote a treatise on *Rights and Duties*, so vigorous, so original, and so prophetic, that, published after the author's death, in the midst of the Revolution (1789), it seemed a book written for the occasion.

The political principles of this were those of Rousseau. Mably was even more absolutely opposed to all magistracy, hereditary, or even for life; but the great interest of the book was in its applications. Mably affirmed that the citizen has a right, in every state, to aspire to the government best fitted to secure the public happiness, which it is his duty to labor to establish. He set out from this to draw up a true manual for the use of revolutions. Men should pass, he affirmed, by degrees, from the monarchy to the republic. The first means is to become enlightened. All agitation benefits liberty, if the nation is enlightened; or despotism, if it is ignorant and brutalized. We are not to do like those men who become terrified at the slightest movement in the body politic, and aspire only to a repose which is the moral death of this body. Civil war itself is preferable to despotism. The English are to pass from the mixed monarchy to the republic. They failed by going too fast under Cromwell: they did too much in 1640, and not enough in 1688. The French should begin by establishing their ancient States-General. There should be no partial reforms, which would not touch the principle of the evil, royal despotism, and which would abolish those secondary forces,—those corporations and privileges, bad in themselves, but useful temporarily in maintaining some points of resistance against despotism.

He did not see that these privileges serve as props to royalty while resisting it, and that despotism, once isolated, would fall

more easily ; but he speedily became again surprisingly clear-sighted. After urging the parliament and all the bodies and orders to defend what remained to them, and to strive to recover what they had lost, not for their interest, but as an example to the people, he affirmed that the parliament might become the great instrument of liberty. The parliament should have (in 1756) "acknowledged that it had exceeded its powers in consenting to new taxes, and have asserted the principle that the nation alone has a right to impose them ; have drawn an historical picture of the usurpations of kings ; and have demanded, in consequence, the holding of the States-General. . . . You would have seen the prodigious effect that such remonstrances would have made upon the public. Your most obscure bourgeois would have suddenly been regarded as citizens, the parliament would have seen itself seconded by all the orders of the State, and a general cry of approbation would have thrown the court into consternation. . . . These opportunities will return."

These were not conjectures : it was history written in advance.

Mabli was convinced that the parliament would come to the point of demanding the States-General, however jealous of them it might be. His *second-sight* abandoned him, inasmuch as he did not foresee, thirty years in advance, the force and audacity with which the Third Estate would abolish the privileged orders, and, with much greater reason, the parliament itself. He believed that the parliament would lead the States by placing itself at the head of the Third Estate. He drew a plan of progressive reformation, whereby royalty would be reduced almost to the part assigned to it by the constitution of 1791, and would even be deprived of the greater part of the official appointments, but whereby privileged persons would preserve their rank as individuals, if not as separate orders, in the periodical States-General. "It is necessary," he said, "to strengthen anew, and reconstruct by degrees, an enervated and corrupt people."

Mabli then made a new digression into antiquity by the *Conversations of Phocion* (1763) ; a book which contrasts somewhat strangely with the *Treatise on Rights*, and which belongs wholly to the past, as the latter does to the future,¹ save on the question of the harmony that should be established between patriotism and humanity. Mabli was here in advance of Rousseau, although

¹ He professes therein the exclusive and absolute adoration of the ancients, and expresses a wholly *antique* contempt for artisans and mercenaries : like Voltaire, he wishes no one but *land-owners* to be permitted to exercise political rights.

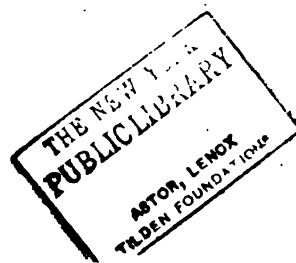


MABLY.

d'après un dessin de St. Bonnerille.

Belhard. del.

Lith. de Santox.



he did not yet possess those precise ideas concerning nationalities which no one possessed in the eighteenth century, and which are forged only in the fire of battles.

He soon returned to his great idea of urging the reëstablishment of national assemblies, and sought to give the support of history to the democratic theory. From this proceeded the *Observations on the History of France*, a work in which a new interpretation replaced the ideas of Boulainvilliers, Dubos, and Montesquieu, by taking from each of the preceding systems whatever it contained in favor of free institutions.¹ Mabli did not know how to go back to our true origin, the Celtic world, as was to be done during the Revolution with more instinct than science. He was led into many illusions by the preconceived determination to discover the national unity and the general assemblies of the people in ages when the nationality did not exist; when there were Franks and Gallo-Romans, but no Frenchmen. He did not see that the nation proper was formed only by the social movement from the eleventh to the twelfth centuries. The contemporaneous generation did not look so closely. Morally freed from the chains of the past, accustomed by its masters to judge traditions from the height of its reason, it no longer felt the need of supporting its doctrines by historical proofs: nevertheless, it joyfully welcomed the aid which it received; and the impulse of public opinion in favor of Mabli was such, that professional scholars dared not even dispute the most erroneous parts of his system.²

¹ 1765-1788. — Upon these *Observations*, etc., see Aug. Thierry, *Considérations sur l'Hist. de France*, ch. iii.; *Œuvres complètes*, t. VII. p. 81.

² The great erudite publications, the legacies of preceding generations, were pursued with perseverance, without exciting much interest in a public preoccupied with more exciting questions. Another monument of Benedictine learning, the *Art de vérifier les dates* (1st ed. 1749, 2d ed. 1770), worthily closes the long series of the works of these learned congregations, about to disappear with the ancient system of society. Some secular scholars, at the head of whom must be placed Lacurne de Sainte-Palaise, were beginning to investigate with curiosity the primitive monuments of chivalry and the poetry of the Middle Ages, buried for centuries under imitations which had caused the original to be forgotten. The *Cabinet des Chartes* was founded in 1762 by Bertin, the minister of the King's household, for the purpose of assembling all the monuments of royal, seigniorial, and municipal legislation, scattered among the public and private archives; and Brequigni commenced, with La Porte du Theil, the *Collection de Diplômes, Chartes*, etc., interrupted by the Revolution, and resumed in 1832. Father Lelong, of the Oratory, had undertaken in 1719, under the title *Bibliothèque historique de la France*, the general catalogue of the documents relative to our history: this immense work was completed by Fevret de Fontette (1768). Writers of great learning, De Guignes and Lebeau, the one in his *Histoire des Huns*, the other in his *Histoire de Bas-Empire*, studied the obscure ages in which the invasion of the barbarians of Europe and Asia subverted and reconstructed the world. The *Histoire de France*,

It was in *Legislation*, published in 1776, that Mably summed up his whole theory. His Utopian ideal was closely allied to that of Morelli. If he did not absolutely condemn all property, he attacked landed property as being the principle of social inequality, and did not perceive that this inequality, at least within certain limits, preceded the partition of lands. He fancied, like Morelli, the system of communism to have been organized in primitive society; and his arguments on the possibility of this society, and the employment of the point of honor as the stimulus and recompense of labor, instead of material advantages, are the source of all that has been written in our times upon the same theme. The chief difference is that he did not hope that property, once rooted by time, could be abolished. He agreed with Rousseau in acknowledging that legislators should thenceforth cause it to be respected as sacred, in order to avoid greater evils, and even the destruction of society. He did not believe, above all, that absolute equality could be associated with the enjoyments of refined civilization.¹ Far from it: in order to approach this equality as closely as possible, he deemed it necessary to simplify public manners extremely, to reduce the public treasury and the expenditures, to extend everywhere the network of sumptuary laws, and to fetter and diminish commerce and manufactures.²

Among many impracticable propositions, or incompatible with individual liberty, he expressed views, some at least specious, others sound and fruitful, which have since been realized in part. He desired the assistance of the State against accidents of Nature (a kind of national mutual insurance), *the equality of inheritance*

lightly undertaken by the Abbé Velli, although continued with more serious studies by Villaret and Garnier, erred too much in its foundation to be ranked in the same category. We must not forget, in the annals of erudition, the president De Brosse, of the parliament of Dijon, who was not only a profound scholar, but a writer of the rarest and most original talent, too little read at the present time. — See the interesting pages devoted to him by M. Villemain, *Tableau de la Littérature française au dix-huitième siècle*, part I. t. II. p. 191.

¹ In his *Principes de Morale* (1784), he opposes those who claim that a good policy "would render the unrestrained growth of all the passions useful to society," and seems to refute Fourier in advance. He is not, however, a Stoic: he rejects civic Stoicism, which bases morality on devotion to society, like the *mysticism* which bases it on the love of God. He takes as a basis the love of self, and desires men to rise from the love of self to the love of their fellow-citizens, of humanity, and of God, as being the true road to happiness. His morality, therefore, is *utilitarian*, so far as it is possible for spiritualistic morality to be such. At the bottom, it is that of Franklin.

² The head of the sect that attempted to establish communism by force, *Gracchus Babeuf*, deviating from the *Code of Nature* to approach the precepts of Mably, rejected the arts and social refinements.

among children, and the abolition of entails: he wished collateral inheritance to be limited to a certain degree, etc.¹

“There is an infallible test whereby to judge of the wisdom of a law; namely, to ask whether the law proposed tends to cause greater equality among the citizens.”

He desired the transformation of great monarchies into federative republics, the different parts of which should be separately administered, but governed by the same laws, and which should act in concert by means of central assemblies, and make but one body with respect to foreign countries. He took a step beyond Rousseau by acknowledging that great representative democracies can be ruled with more justice and stability than small republics, where the law is voted in the forum. He admitted the penalty of death for great crimes. He desired the arming of the citizens, as in Switzerland; public and general education on the footing of equality; and, like Rousseau, faith in God and a future life as the bases of education and society: but he went farther, and, too often hurried away by a blind imitation of the ancients, desired a veritable religion of State, a political religion beyond Theism, and relapsed into all the abuses infallibly involved by this principle.

In short, Mably remains one of the most eminent leaders of the political and social school which seeks unity and equality at any price, even at that of individual development. He cannot, however, be unreservedly surrendered to the communists: his imagination was with them, but his reason paused at a mitigated socialism.

We have already pointed out the great geniuses who inclined to the opposite side, Montesquieu and Voltaire, through their natural disposition, nevertheless, and without an exclusive system. We shall presently witness the formation of a systematic school, a real sect, which, if freed from certain inconsistencies pertaining to its origin, appears to tend to absolute individual liberty, even at the expense of national unity and equality,—the sect of the ECONOMISTS, which closes the vast intellectual circle of the eighteenth century.

We will first, however, cast a glance at the state of manners and the arts, and behold the modifications endured by society since the first half of the century. We saw it formerly brilliant,

¹ He acknowledged that the too great abundance of men is an evil, as well as depopulation. This is remarkable, and marks a new phase in political economy: since the Middle Ages, the complaint had always been respecting the dearth of men.

glozed, and careless, like the factitious lights of the Opera ball.¹ We find it again still intoxicated with itself, but with a very different intoxication, full of impetuous flights, bold and contradictory thoughts and unbounded hopes, and advancing with the confidence of youth, by the flashing lightnings of the storm, towards an unknown future.

The old, palled, and refined generation had rapidly given place to a rejuvenated and ardent generation, disputed between all the influences of heaven and hell, and fluctuating between all extremes,—the stoical and civic Deism of Rousseau, the fastidious, humane, and liberal Epicureanism of Voltaire, and the Atheism and unbounded license of the Holbachians. Unheard-of contrasts presented themselves everywhere: a systematic licentiousness succeeded, in the novels of Diderot and his school, the libertine frivolity of their predecessors; an audacious effrontery freed itself from the reticence of good taste, which had preserved decorum while sacrificing morality; the *Maid of Orleans*, which had created a scandal at the time of its appearance in 1755, became a title to honor in the sight of a great part of the public: yet love, the ideal, had returned among us; the eternal divinities of the heart and the imagination were restored to their temples with so much fervor, that selfish and vain levity and hackneyed sensuality dared no longer avow themselves in the fashionable *liaisons*. The reason of this was, that every thing now was done or pretended to be done seriously, even evil. Sentiment, passion, and nature were the gods to which men sacrificed sincerely or through fashion. Duty, even, again found votaries. Lawful love, if it did not reign, was no longer ridiculed. The domestic virtues began to be lauded by most, and practised by many. Rousseau's voice had been heard: mothers nourished their children, natural liberty became again a part of the earliest education, and the old and harsh methods which oppressed and stifled the spontaneity of childhood fell into discredit, and were abandoned. This transitional generation was paving the way for a generation more virile in body and heart, in which every thing would be strong and energetic both for good and for evil. The ideas of social renovation were in every one's mind, superficial in the frivolous, and profound in the rest, whom they inflamed to fanaticism. Men had now an aim: this alone changed every thing. The words liberty, citizen, the country, and equality, were in vogue among all that thought, read, and spoke: the fash-

¹ See vol. I. p. 298 *et seq.*

ionable man was called Richelieu the day before; he was speedily to be called La Fayette.

No age had been less dependent on traditions: the universal watchword seemed to be, War on all authority, war on all *prejudice*. Nevertheless, humanity cannot live in the domain of the absolute, or free itself from the necessity of connecting the future with the past, which is the very law of progress. To know one's precedents while judging them is a great part of the science of life. The eighteenth century did not escape this law. It willingly accepted the hypothetical ancient France of Mably; it studied contemporaneous England with Montesquieu: but it clung, above all, with Rousseau as well as with Montesquieu and Mably themselves, to a tradition more authentic than the first, and more direct, although more remote, than the second. The admiration of the ancients revived on all sides, no longer literary as in the seventeenth century, but political as in the sixteenth, and with much more force and effectiveness. The excellent Rollin had paved the way, without suspecting it, for the work of the political philosophers. It was no longer of the Latin men of letters, the courtiers of the Cæsars, but of the Roman citizens of the republican era and their predecessors of the Hellenic cities, that lessons and examples were to be sought, — a new phase of the Renaissance, in which immortal antiquity, after aiding us in reconstructing our ideas and arts, was about to aid us in reconstructing our laws and societies, and in delivering the modern era from the yoke of the intermediate age! The movement was legitimate, despite the errors, excesses, and unskilfulness of an imitation which too often attached itself to the form, where the spirit, the moral inspiration, should alone have been sought. However profitable to us may have been the excellent examples of English liberty, our national tradition proceeds from elsewhere. Many superior minds, a whole great party, were to exhaust themselves in following Delolme, the popularizer of the English Constitution, while believing themselves to be following Montesquieu, and in attempting to transplant upon our soil the mixed forms of hereditary inheritance and election, of aristocracy and democracy, peculiar to Great Britain, which the English race itself rejected as soon as it settled outside of England in new conditions.¹ The monarchy, which created our national unity, was the offspring of the Roman empire.² The

¹ The Anglo-Americans have indeed preserved the two houses, but have rendered them both elective.

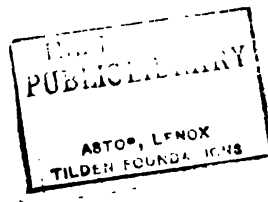
² Not alone, however, of the Roman empire: two other traditions were combined

democracy, whose mission it was to create our moral unity, would find in itself primitive Gaul modified by Greece, the two Romes, and Christianity.¹

The great movement of public opinion was manifested everywhere in manners and customs. By the side of the indications that we have pointed out, other symptoms appeared, of less gravity, but which should not be neglected by history. The costume, for instance, began to be less gorgeous and artificial, at once by a spontaneous modification and in imitation of the English. Plain stuffs of grave colors reappeared among men; and that elegant simplicity, so much celebrated by Rousseau in his heroines, among women. The hoops and the enormous coiffures would have disappeared before, had not court etiquette maintained them in opposition to the spirit of innovation. Women were not long in

with this, the feudal and Germanic tradition; and the Hebrew tradition of the *Anointed of the Lord*, introduced in the train of Christianity.

¹ That of the ancient republic and that of the juriconsults, those admirable men, who saved the honor of the human race amidst the ignominy of the era of the Cæsars; apostles of equity, who founded civil law, to console the world for political law, momentarily lost. In the course of the history of the seventeenth century, we have called to mind the claims to honor of the most illustrious successor of these great men, our Domat. The Cartesian and Jansenist juriconsult had, in his turn, a successor in the eighteenth century, the indefatigable Pothier. A stranger to his time by his morals, beliefs, and even prejudices, Pothier was allied to it by the services which he rendered to the cause of progress. While theory demanded judicial reforms by the voice of the philosophers, practice, with Pothier, paved the way for their realization. Calm, simple, and pious, like Domat, whose opinions and sentiments he possessed, without his metaphysical profundity, Pothier passed his whole life at Orleans (1699-1772), at first in the modest functions of the presidial court; then in the chair of French law, to which he was appointed by D'Aguesseau, whom he had greatly aided in the preparation of his numerous ordinances on the unity of jurisprudence. Pothier published, from 1748 to 1752, his *Pandectes justiniennes, rédigées dans un nouvel ordre*, under the auspices and with the assistance of D'Aguesseau. Domat had begun his career with the idea of reëstablishing order in the chaotic compilation of Tribonian, and rose from this point to the theory itself of civil law: Pothier realized Domat's first idea, less lofty, but eminently useful. For the first time, we had the true body of the Roman law, restored and properly arranged according to the rational and geometrical method. Next to the works of genius, the most admirable are the labors of learning and patience, employed by an upright mind and a just heart. In 1760, Pothier published the *Coutume d'Orléans, avec Commentaires*. These commentaries, which embrace all the diversities of our local law, form, perhaps, the most complete and methodical treatise on this subject extant. The *Traité des Obligations* appeared in 1761; then other treatises on contracts. The careless simplicity and easy good nature of Pothier leave a little more dignity and elegance to be desired: yet his logic and lucidity are not the only things which secure for this juriconsult the respect of posterity; but also, and above all, the essentially moral character of his method. Faithful to the tradition of Domat, he always reasons from the internal tribunal, the tribunal of the conscience, — from what is *just in itself* to positive law. He was the principal source of the *CIVIL CODE* with respect to contracts, the best part of this code, and will always remain the best commentator thereon.





restoring to their hair its liberty and its natural colors. The return to Nature was invoked in trifles as in great things.

The most marked signs of a moral revolution were manifested in the arts. Sentiments of patriotism and of French nationality appeared in tragedy, applauded by Rousseau, despite the monarchical form in which they were still invested, and although there was little except intention to praise in the poet De Belloi. The new tendencies were more happily expressed on another stage. From 1760 to 1780, the essentially French school of the comic opera blossomed forth in all its glory,—that familiar drama in prose mixed with verse, which realized in part the wishes of Diderot, and contradicted the system of Rousseau concerning the musical incapacity of France, while prodigally drawing inspiration from Rousseau himself, but from Rousseau tempered and softened. Sedaine and other writers lent a successful coöperation to the musicians, — the graceful Dalairac, and Monsigni, an artist full of feeling, who *sang by instinct*, as was said of him by his illustrious rival, Grétri,¹ whose simple and rapid melodies, sparkling with eternal youth, still enchant us by their very contrast to the colossal works of that modern music which succumbs beneath the complications of its science and the weight of its enormous machinery. The essential characteristics of Grétri and his rivals are naturalness, lively and charming art, without subtlety, vehemence or overpowering fire, and thrilling, naïve, and tender passion. There is nothing therein that savors of a corrupt society. We seem to feel in this rejuvenated art the coolness of a vernal breeze: it is like those songs of birds, which, in one of the creations of the great German symphonist, so closely precede the bursting of the storm.

A foreigner, a German, came to complete the young French school by striking deeper chords, and possessing himself of the grand opera. Gluck had struggled long against the insignificance of the Italian canvases. His altogether dramatic genius revealed itself only when he at length found subjects worthy of his thoughts, and a libretto-writer capable of comprehending him. "I have sought," he writes, "to reduce music to its true function,—that of seconding poetry in order to strengthen the expression of the sentiments and the interest of the situations; without interrupting the action, and damping it by superfluous ornament. I think that it ought to add to the action what is added to a correct and well-composed drawing by the vividness of the coloring and the har-

¹ Born at Liège in 1741.

siasm of Rousseau and Mabli, that Louis David was formed. The one gave him his subjects and inspiration; the others his form, and that tendency to make statuary in painting, as the sculptors of the beginning of the eighteenth century had made painting in statuary.

It is not our province to dwell in detail here on the merits or the defects of this great artist. The author of the *Horaces*, the *Death of Socrates*, the *Brutus*, the *Oath of the Tennis-Court*, and *Leonidas*; the composer of those festivals copied from the antique, which the memory cannot succeed in disconnecting sufficiently from the terrible scenes amidst which they were celebrated,—belongs to the history of modern France. We have only to chronicle his origin.

We must return from the fine arts to the philosophic region most remote from the sphere of the beautiful,—POLITICAL ECONOMY. The philosophers whose doctrines we have hitherto set forth had made social economy, like the ancients, only an adjunct of politics. The school of which it remains for us to speak, on the contrary, subordinated politics with every thing else to economy, but to a transcendent economy which strove to identify justice and utility, the moral laws and the physical laws. The physiocrats are the last phalanx to be reviewed in the great army of the French mind of the eighteenth century. The last-comers, they were the first called upon to put their doctrines to the test, because they appeared the least opposed, if not to the reality of existing facts, at least to the form of the established power.

During long ages, every thing concerning the formation and distribution of wealth had been abandoned to empiricism, routine, popular prejudices, the interests, more or less well understood and more or less changeable, of governments and industrial corporations, and the more or less arbitrary interpretations of religious precepts. The science of wealth had not even a name among the human sciences, and it did not seem to be suspected that this kind of phenomena might have laws peculiar to itself. The commercial republics of the Middle Ages were the first to show a certain consistency in regulations which bore the imprint of their bitter rivalries: they gave the outline of the protective, or rather prohibitory system, which was borrowed from them by the Spanish monarchy, and which an Italian minister, Chancellor Birague, introduced complete in all its parts into France under Catherine de Medici. Sulli reacted forcibly, in behalf of the agricultural interests, against a commercial legislation which prohibited the

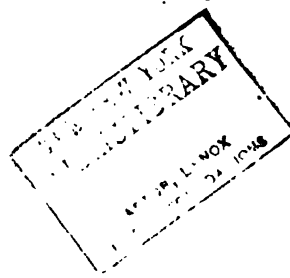


F. Hamanville del.

DAVID.

Député du Dépt. de Paris, à la Con. Nat^{le} l'an 1. de la Rép.

Louis David



exportation of raw materials. The *mercantile* movement, however, had the ascendancy. Public opinion was in its favor, as is attested by the *cahiers* (official instructions) of the States-General of 1614. The system no longer of absolute prohibition, but of differential duties, which developed manufactures and maritime commerce by the protection of the State, was in full vigor in the seventeenth century with Cromwell in England, and Colbert in France. The rivalries of commerce envenomed the old political rivalries: antagonism existed everywhere. The fortunes of the mercantile system were various: of three great States that applied it, Spain was ruined, France and England prospered. Holland, it is true, succeeded on her side by the system of liberty rendered necessary by her character as the factor of nations.

Foreign commerce is only one term of the problem of wealth: if France and England followed the same course in this respect, they gave very different solutions on two other questions of prime importance, — the internal organization of the arts and manufactures, and the assessment of the taxes. The arts and manufactures, well-nigh free in the primitive constitution of the corporations of the Middle Ages, had been continually more and more restricted, hemmed in, and shackled among us, from age to age. Colbert alone had sought to turn to the advantage of the national interests, and of a typical perfection of manufacture, the restrictive regulations invented by the selfish interests of privileged artisans and of the royal treasury. He succeeded at first; but, after him, his regulations remaining stationary while wants and tastes multiplied, the instrument of progress speedily became an obstacle to it. As to the taxes, we have had occasion to dwell but too often on their bad assessment, the still worse mode of their collection, and the iniquitous privileges which concentrated almost the entire burden upon the lower classes. Colbert had not been at liberty to change the system, and all the practical improvements which he had introduced therein disappeared with him. England, on the contrary, after the example of Holland, relaxed, then broke almost everywhere the industrial fetters of the Middle Ages: taxation with her, better assessed and better collected, did not go so far as to dry up the source of the public wealth by crushing the laborer at his plough. The taxes on consumption were less onerous than in France, and the land-tax was laid on the estate, and not on the labor. The rich did not claim the shameful privilege of throwing their share of the public burdens on the poor.

England, therefore, continued to grow rich ; while France, the brilliant epoch of Colbert once eclipsed, languished, advanced but slowly and with unequal tread, and suffered herself to be outstripped by her rival.

Public opinion, meanwhile, had long separated external protection from internal regulation. The States-General of 1614 had claimed the freedom of the arts and manufactures ; and doubts had been more than once uttered, even in Colbert's presence, concerning the value of the regulating and restrictive system. Tradition has preserved the merchant Legendre's reply to the great minister. "What must be done to aid you ?" "*Let us alone.*" A few years after, Bois-Guillebert protested at once against internal regulations and external protection, and showed that the mercantile system reposed on a false basis with respect to the part assigned to the precious metals ; that great illusions existed concerning what is called the *balance of trade* ; that a State enriches itself, not by attracting and retaining within its limits the greatest possible quantity of gold and silver, but by increasing the fruits of the earth and the *products of manufactures*, and facilitating their consumption. He maintained that the regulation of industrial and commercial intercourse belongs to Nature, and not to men ; in other terms, that economic phenomena should be absolutely abandoned to the free competition of individuals. At the same time, he affirmed that not only all the citizens of the same nation, but all the nations of the earth, are connected together by solidarity of interests ; that all exchange must be alike profitable to both parties ; that it is impossible to sell without buying, and that it is impossible to injure others without being injured one's self. Far from seeing universal warfare in competition, he thus proclaimed in the economic domain, in the name of interest, the same law of human solidarity that Christianity and philosophy proclaimed in the moral domain in the name of duty.

This singular and bold genius was the true father of the economists. The two essential principles adhered to by every economic school, without distinction of shades, — the substitution of liberty for authority in individual intercourse, and of solidarity for antagonism in international intercourse, — were revealed in him in all their greatness, all their abstract truth, and all their peril ; peril, if this truth is made to exclude all other truths ; peril, if liberty implies the denial of collective rights and duties ; peril,

if international solidarity prematurely disarms nationality in favor of cosmopolitanism.

The general theories of Bois-Guillebert, mixed with many eccentricities and historical errors, did not at first extend beyond a small circle of meditative minds. The special theory of Vauban on taxation (the abolition of privileges, the abolition of the greater part of the taxes on consumption, and the proportional assessment of a direct tax on incomes from real estate and others) was more widely diffused. The special theory of Law on credit, which carried with it an entire reorganization of social economy, was tested, excited, then overturned France; and ideas of credit were long swept away from among us by the reaction that followed the failure of this colossal attempt; while credit worked successfully in England, where it was introduced with less noise and rashness. The idea of industrial liberty was not involved in this defeat, but unceasingly gained ground among us, at the same time that the violent convulsions which occurred in the domain of conventional values turned the public mind towards the inexhaustible source of real wealth,—the land, the cultivation of the soil. Meanwhile the doctrines of Bois-Guillebert on free international exchange, and the vanity of the balance of trade and the monopolization of the metallic currency, were adopted by a few English writers, then returned to us from the other side of the Channel with the works of David Hume and Josiah Tucker. David Hume, a metaphysician, economist, and historian, combined the appeal to liberty with the defence of luxury, which he sustained by a new and specious argument. "It has been the arts of luxury," he says, "that have produced the industrial and commercial classes, the middle classes; and it has been the middle classes that have taken the initiative in reforms, and secured their triumph in spite of the aristocracy." He well refutes the old maxim, "The profit of one is the injury of another," and demonstrates that it is more to the interest of a commercial nation to be surrounded with rich nations than poor ones, "for the same reason that one does a better business with an opulent man than with a man destitute of means."¹

The number of thinkers that turned their attention to these problems continued to increase among us. The moment had come for the systematizing spirit of the eighteenth century and of France inevitably to take possession of them, and to strive to convert them into a methodical and positive science. Two men,

¹ D. Hume, *Essay on Commerce*, etc.

powerful through their character and the energy of their convictions, and favored by their position in society, took the leadership of the movement. One was the intendant of commerce, Vincent de Gournai: the other was Dr. Quesnai, the physician to the King. Gournai, an able and upright merchant before becoming a member of the bureau of commerce, had arrived at theory only by a long practice of facts. It was while living, as a witness and an actor, amidst the innumerable accidents and incessant variations of external and internal commerce, that he believed that he discerned "the sole and primitive laws, founded on Nature herself, by which all the values existing in commerce vibrate, then settle at a determined value, as bodies abandoned to their own weight arrange themselves spontaneously according to the order of their specific gravity."¹ If Nature regulates economic relations by necessary laws, men should not interfere by arbitrary laws: LET THEM ALONE.

Let them alone! that is, let there be no more regulations to shackle manufacture, and make the right to labor a privilege; no more prohibitions to prevent exchanges; no more excessive and multiplied duties to fetter circulation and restrict consumption; no more tariffs to fix the value of commodities and merchandise. Wheat is merchandise as well as any thing else: it should be transported and exported freely. Money is merchandise as well as any thing else: the conditions of loaning money, and the agreements that regulate its interest, should be free. The State should not lay a tariff on money any more than on any other negotiable article: it should only labor indirectly to reduce the rate of interest, by refraining from increasing, by its own loans, the number of those in quest of capital.

Is liberty, the *let-alone policy*, the absolute denial of public action, of the interference of the State with respect to manufactures and commerce? This was not the idea of Gournai, who strongly approved of encouragements, rewards, and premiums. The State should not fetter the voluntary activity of the citizens, but is in no wise forbidden to stimulate and aid, to enlighten and sustain it. Let statesmen give enlightenment and support to laboring men, but leave each one to use this enlightenment and support as he chooses. The interests of private individuals being the same as the general interests, and each man understanding his own interests better than any other man to whom these interests are indifferent, the general interests will be better served by the free

¹ Turgot, *Éloge de Gournai*.

individual activity of interested persons than by the careless or arbitrary direction of agents of the State. The system of liberty will succeed much better than the restrictive system in increasing the public wealth, and will prevent the abrupt and violent variations of the price of necessary commodities, — variations which are so onerous to the people, and so dangerous to the government. The restrictive and regulating system is equally prejudicial to the State and to the majority of the citizens; for it places the poor at the mercy of the rich. The general liberty to manufacture, to buy and to sell, is the only means of insuring to the vender, on the one hand, a price capable of encouraging production, and to the consumer, on the other, the best merchandise at the lowest price compatible with the just remuneration of the producer.

Such were the principles earnestly propagated by M. de Gournai, not by his writings, for he published no original work,¹ but by his speech and personal action. The chief of the bureau of commerce, his hierarchic superior, M. Trudaine,² became a convert to his doctrines, aided him in attempting some partial and prudent applications of them, and authorized him to spread them among the provincial administrations, and the commercial and manufacturing classes, in the fruitful rounds which he made from province to province during several years. It was in one of these journeys that he instigated the establishment of the Breton Society for the Improvement of Agriculture, Manufactures, and Commerce (1756); a society the example of which gave rise to many analogous associations throughout the rest of France.³ Gournai died prematurely, at forty-seven, in 1759; and posterity might have failed to recognize the importance of the part played by him, had not his merits been brought to light and his views excellently summed up by the illustrious man who was destined to attempt to realize them on a large scale, and who had been, while still young, the companion of his journeys and his economic apostleship, — Turgot.

M. de Gournai, although he possessed the generalizing spirit in a very high degree, had been especially a practical man. The theorist, the systematic organizer of the new science, was the phy-

¹ But two translations of English works are possessed from his pen; but he inspired numerous writers against the shackles on manufactures. Among the publicists in his train is observed the name of *Roland de la Platière*, the inspector of manufactures, and the author of the article *Mâitriees*, in the *Encyclopédie*: he was the future minister and martyr of the Revolution.

² It was under Trudaine, the director of bridges and highways, that the bridges of Orleans, Tours, Saumur, and Moulins, were built.

³ Societies of Tours, Paris, Lyons, Montauban, etc., 1761.

sician, François Quesnai. Gournai and he had pursued, at first separately, then in concert, parallel but not identical paths. The origin of Gournai was commercial; that of Quesnai,¹ agricultural. Although the son of a jurisconsult, Quesnai had been brought up as a countryman; and the taste for the country, the anxiety for rural interests, had constantly followed him in the career into which he had been drawn by other inclinations and aptitudes. Surgery made his fortune: he aided his celebrated fellow-surgeon, La Peironnie, in elevating their art from the inferior position in which it was kept by the physicians. The perpetual secretary of the Academy of Surgery founded in 1731 at the instigation of La Peironnie, the author of excellent works on pathology, he practised surgery and medicine with equal success; and, become the physician-in-chief to the King and the physician of Madame de Pompadour, he took advantage of the functions which gave him intimate access to the King and the favorite to open the ear of the masters of France to his economic doctrines. A strange existence was that of this simple, upright, open, and positive man among all the types of corruption and falsehood that peopled Versailles. Louis and his mistress loved him as well as they could love any thing: he pleased them by his contrast to others and to themselves. Louis, so ill disposed towards all the rest of the philosophers, called Quesnai his *thinker*,² listened to him willingly, and, a thing rare with him, did not listen fruitlessly, as was attested by royal edicts of which we shall speak hereafter, and which were due to the personal influence of Quesnai as much as to the counsel of that bureau of commerce of which Gournai was the soul. These fruits, it must be said, were speedily poisoned by the depravity of Louis and his surroundings. The political side of the system of Quesnai explains the difference made by Louis between the economists and the rest of the innovators. Quesnai undertook to consolidate the *throne*, and did not touch the *altar*.

This was not, indeed, because he was a timid innovator. None manifested a like intrepidity of certainty in the conceptions of his brain; none had an ambition so colossal. This apostle of *physical government* was the most abstract, as the most trenchant, dogmatist of his age. This theorist of material wealth formed his mind by studying the transcendent spiritualism of Malebranche.

¹ Born at Merey, near Montfort-l'Amaury, June 4, 1694.

² He gave him letters of nobility, with three pansies (*pensées*) for arms, and the device, *Propter cogitationem mentis*. This was, moreover, an anachronism as to substance, and a bad pun as to form. — See curious details concerning Quesnai in Madame du Hausset.

The reason of this was, that he did not aspire to found the special science of wealth, but the general science upon which all others depend, — the science of social life and human relations. The science of wealth was to him only a derivative of the knowledge of natural right. He desired to base a whole system of social philosophy upon the knowledge of the natural laws which regulate the relations of man with matter, and of man with man relative to matter.

Human society is a necessary fact. Providence has assigned to it necessary laws, — laws, at least, which it cannot transgress without injury to itself. Utility and justice are identical for all society: morality and interest, right and duty, are essentially united.¹ The mission of the government, the authority, is not to *make* laws, but to *declare*, to proclaim, the necessary and natural laws, and to insure their observance. *Evidence* is the principle which should guide both the governing and the governed; that is, the natural laws should be rendered so evident, that it would be impossible for society longer to endure arbitrary laws.² Public instruction is the great means of initiating men into *evidence*. Instruction is the first, the fundamental duty of the State.

But what are these natural and necessary laws?

Natural right is the right which man has to the things adapted to his enjoyment. The natural order is the physical constitution which God himself has given to the universe, and through which every thing is effected in Nature. The natural laws are the essential conditions to which men are subjected in order to secure all the advantages which the natural order can procure for them.³ From these laws are derived society and the rules of society. Man's natural right is, in point of fact, increased, and not diminished, by society. The natural social order founds on the incontestable experience of physical good and evil the *evident* knowl-

¹ "No rights without duties, no duties without rights," was well said by Lemer cier de La Rivière, one of the principal disciples of Quesnai.

² "We can reduce to a *physical*, exact, *evident*, and complete science, that of right, order, laws, and natural government." — *Physiocratie*, t. I., 1767; *Discours* of the editor (Dupont de Nemours), who has collected, under the title *Physiocratie*, or the Government of Nature, all the principal writings of Quesnai. The *Physiocratie* has been republished in the collection of the economists, Guillaumin, 1846.

³ The natural laws are either physical or moral. "By physical law is meant the regulated course of every physical event of the natural order, which is *evidently* the most advantageous to the human race. By moral law is meant the rule of every human action of the moral order in conformity with the physical order, which is *evidently* the most advantageous to the human race." — Quesnai, *Droit naturel*; ap. *Physiocrates*, part i. p. 52, Guillaumin, 1846.

edge of moral good and evil, of essential justice and injustice. The legitimate order consists in the right of possession secured and guaranteed by force of a tutelary and sovereign authority to men united in society.

Natural right ends directly, therefore, in the principle of property, and is summed up therein entire.

Property has three phases legitimately begotten of each other: 1st, *Personal* property, identical with liberty, or the ownership of the faculties which have been given us by Nature, and which are the instruments of labor necessary for our preservation; 2d, *Movable* property, or the ownership of articles of consumption acquired by our labor; 3d, *Landed* property, the appropriation of the soil which produces the articles of consumption, acquired by its first clearing and its continued cultivation. The appropriation of the soil, like the other two kinds of property, falls within the domain of the natural laws, in the sense, that, being more productive than collective property, it was necessary in order to secure to communities the greatest development of which they were susceptible.¹

Individual appropriation, doubtless, greatly increases the inequality made by Nature among men; but the inequality of conditions does not offend the *essential order of justice*. "The law of property is indeed the same for all men. Rights are all of equal *justice*; but they are not all of equal *value*, because their value is wholly independent of the law. Each one acquires in proportion to the faculties which give him the means of acquiring: now the measure of these faculties is not the same among all men."² In other terms, the equality demanded by the natural laws is the equality of rights, and not the equality of possessions.

Society once founded upon property, how is it organized, how governed?

The earth producing more than is necessary for the subsistence of him who cultivates it, and certain of the land-owners having increased their portion of the soil by inheritance, purchase, etc., they have become able to cease cultivating it themselves, and to intrust the cultivation of their lands to other citizens, in consideration of sharing in its fruits. Still others, being neither land-

¹ "The happiness of the human species consists in the multiplicity of its enjoyments. To render the enjoyments common, it is necessary that the property should be exclusive."—*Abbrégé des principes de l'Economie politique*, 1772 (attributed to the Margrave Ch. Fr. de Badè); ap. *Physiocrates*, part i. p. 368.

² Lemercier de La Rivière, *Ordre naturel et essentiel des sociétés politiques*, ch. ii.

owners nor husbandmen, set to work to manipulate, transform, and circulate the products of the soil in behalf of the owners and the husbandmen, and give their labor in exchange for their subsistence. Three classes are therefore formed: 1st, The productive class, or the husbandmen; 2d, The land-owning, or *disposable* class,—disposable for liberal studies, public functions, etc.; 3d, The *sterile* class, or the artisans and traffickers,—sterile, not because it is useless, but because, the earth alone being productive of wealth, the labor of the artisans and traders serves only to preserve the wealth produced, and does not add new wealth thereto.

The earth alone being productive of wealth, the public burdens should be assessed only on the product of the earth. But it is necessary to make a distinction in this product between the gross revenue and the net revenue, which Vauban has not done in his royal income-tax. From the gross revenues must be deducted the expenses of the cultivation and improvement of the soil, the subsistence of the laborer and his assistants, and his just remuneration. There remains the net revenue of the land-owner, the only disposable revenue which exists in society. It is upon this net revenue, or landed income, that taxation should be laid exclusively. The taxation levied on the other classes always falls in the end upon the land-owner, who receives a smaller revenue if the farmer is impoverished; and the bad system of collection creates, in this case, a new class, no longer merely sterile, but injurious and parasitical,—the class of financiers and fiscal agents. No financial fortunes should be made in the administration of the taxes. The credit of financiers is a bad resource for the State, which should be supported by taxation, and not by loans. Pecuniary fortunes are clandestine wealth that knows no country.

The State, the sovereign, is the co-proprietor of the net revenue with the individual land-owners. It is for reason, for *evidence*, to fix the share which lawfully reverts to it, without injury to private citizens. The husbandmen should dispose of nearly three-fifths of the gross revenue,—two-fifths for their expenses, compensation, and agricultural agents, and one-fifth to pay for the labors of the sterile class which are necessary to them. The remaining two-fifths form the net revenue to be divided between the land-owners and the State.

The share of the State paid, the rights of the land-owner are unlimited with respect to the use of the remainder of his revenue,¹

¹ Nevertheless, he fails in an essential duty if he hoards his money, and suffers it to lie
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and the disposition of his land ; as the rights of the husbandman, the artisan, and all men in general, are unlimited with respect to the fruits of their labor, which are their *movable* property, and the employment of their faculties, which are their *personal* property. Every shackle on labor, manufactures, or commerce, is a violation of the natural laws, of the laws of God.

The reëstablishment of the natural laws would result in increasing the net revenue of the land-owner and the compensation of the husbandman, diminishing the profits of the master manufacturers and merchants artificially raised by the protective system, and overthrowing artificial manufactures in behalf of natural manufactures, or those for which Nature has endowed each country with a special aptitude.

The government should encourage only the *productive* expenditures and the commerce of raw materials. The products of handicraft and manufactures for the use of the nation are only a source of expense, and not of revenue. Their sale abroad can be profitable only to those countries where manual labor is cheap on account of the low price of provisions ; a condition very disadvantageous to the revenue from landed property, and consequently to the net revenue and the State.

The increase of revenues should be thought of more than the increase of population. There is less need of attracting men than wealth to the rural districts ; for the more wealth is employed in agriculture, the fewer men are occupied therein, the more it prospers, and the larger is its revenue. Agriculture prospers only when carried on upon a large scale by rich farmers.

The natural and necessary laws determine not only the foundation of the social organization, but the form of the best government, the government made for man, and adapted to all climates and all nations. The necessity of protecting personal and movable property rendered necessary the establishment of leaders or magistrates from the origin of society ; but the *economic* government, the normal government, was not established

idle instead of putting it again into circulation ; or if he employs it in fanciful purchases, in ornamental superfluities, while expenditures useful to the increase of the social capital remain to be made : for " the augmentation of capital is the chief means of increasing labor, and the greatest interest of society. Money, in reality, belongs, not to private individuals, but to the necessities of the State, to the nation ; and no one should hold it back." This was the language of Law ; but the idea differed, inasmuch as, where Law saw a right of constraint in the hands of the State, Quesnai sees only a moral duty of the private citizen. — *Maximes générales du gouvernement économique d'un royaume agricole* ; ap. *Physiocrates*, part i. p. 94.

until the institution of landed property, which gave society much greater interests to defend, and made it feel the need of a more concentrated and stronger authority. The tutelary and sovereign authority (Quesnai and his disciples use the term *sovereign* in the old acceptation, and confound the sovereign with the government, like the publicists prior to Rousseau) — the sovereign authority should be alone ; that is, it should unite the legislative and the executive. There should be no *counter forces* (distinction or balance of powers). There should be no aristocracy. The division of society into different orders of citizens, some of which exercise sovereign authority over others, destroys the unity of the nation, and substitutes class interests for the general interest, which is the prosperity of agriculture. The sovereign should be invested with *despotic* authority to transform the laws of *evidence* into positive laws, and to secure their execution. Only it is the duty of the magistrates to examine whether the ordinances of the sovereign are in conformity with *evidence* ; and the magistrates themselves should be watched over by *public evidence*. In a nation enlightened by a good system of public instruction concerning the natural laws of order, the government neither would nor could desire to establish positive laws injurious to society, and even to the sovereign. Should it do so, it would be through aberration of mind, and neither the magistrates nor the people should obey.

Quesnai and his disciples do not say, but it tacitly follows from their principles, that in this case, should the sovereign persist, he would be suspended in fact, and the power would be transferred to his heir, — the sovereign power, according to the physiocrats, being hereditary, in order that all the present and future interests of its depositary may be intimately allied with those of society by the proportional division of the net product. Wherever *evidence* reigns, all political guarantees, beginning with election, would be indeed superfluous.

We have endeavored to point out in a few pages, according to the head of the school and his commentaries, the principal outlines of the new science to which Quesnai applied the hitherto vague and floating title of *political economy*,¹ and which, absorbing politics and ethics, was to him the science *par excellence*.

We cannot forbear a profound impression, in which very different feelings are blended, before the vast and bold structure built by this powerful mind. We are bewildered and troubled by this

¹ Literally, *law of the political household, social law*.

amalgamation of new and sublime views, lofty truths, hazardous conjectures, and arbitrary or even chimerical notions, transformed into so-called *evident* dogmas. We feel that all the economic battles of the future would take place in the lists opened by Quesnai, as all the battles of metaphysics had been, and would be, fought on the ground of Descartes. When we endeavor to unravel this first impression, and to judge after having felt, we perceive, on the one hand, that the new theory is nothing else than the fundamental principle of Montesquieu, "Laws are the necessary relations which are derived from the nature of things," developed in the special point of view of the application of human liberty to the appropriation of matter and to economic organization: on the other hand, we see, face to face with the *social contract* of Rousseau, a different conception set forth of the primitive compact;¹ namely, the direct foundation of society upon individual right, and not upon that alienation of each to all, laid down as the basis by Rousseau. The Christian law has been styled the *law of grace*: the law of the economists is the law of justice. To each one his right. The economists reject the antagonism affirmed by Rousseau between the state of nature and the social state: the one is to them the natural and necessary sequence of the other.

This difference at the starting-point was to be found again in the definition of the principle of property. Rousseau, while recognizing it as the foundation of society, made it proceed from positive laws, without denying that it had its indirect origin in the sociability of man: the economists connected it directly with natural laws. It was at the very beginning of a war against the principle of property, destined to be renewed more skilfully and more obstinately, more passionately and more subtly, by turns, during several generations, that this principle was affirmed with an unexampled dogmatic energy and mathematical precision; so that the defence was proportioned in advance to the attack. The economists gave the theory of what Protestantism had forcibly put into practice. The Protestant nations had simultaneously developed human individuality and property, and thus showed in fact that the

¹ The term *natural and necessary laws*, employed by the economists, seems to imply the negation of the social contract; but this term exceeds their true idea. Moral necessity was in question with them, and not fatality; since they admit that primitive society, before the establishment of landed property, was good, but simply less good than the system of society where appropriation is established. It was therefore in voluntary obedience to the providential law of progress that man passed from one form of society to another. — See Dupont de Nemours, *Physiocratie, Discours de l'éditeur*.

one is the sequence of the other, as was to be taught by the economists. The antique agricultural development had coincided with the establishment of landed property: the modern industrial development coincided with the new progress of the principle of property, due to individualism, or rather to Protestant liberty, — a principle for a moment so far exaggerated as to deny the right of expropriation for the public use. The Protestant nations are certainly those in which property is most firmly established, and with it the family. Property had been, in general, imperfectly recognized and feebly respected both by the secular and the ecclesiastical powers in the Catholic States: we have quoted the maxims of Louis XIV. on this subject, which need no comment.

The economists were likewise allied, as to the principle of property, to a more ancient tradition, — the tradition of the people essentially *judicial* and *land-owning*, above all others; the Roman people. Like Montesquieu, like Rousseau, like Mably, they also trod the paths of republican antiquity; but they had entered it by another door. It was precisely the part of their doctrines, that which was allied to the spirit of Roman property, which was to be the first to triumph in the movement of 1789; and in the CIVIL CODE, the offspring of this movement.

It is not difficult to penetrate the origin of the errors which obscured the vast horizon that they opened. These errors originated in their confusion of the absolute and the relative, the necessary and the better, the evident and the probable, perfection and perfectibility. They seized the law of progress for an instant, then lost it by endeavoring to embody it in facts in an immutable form. What could be more rash than to undertake to realize, once for all, *the government of Nature, the necessary laws, evidence?* None but God fully knows *physiocracy*. God has given to man only the faculty of discerning successively the light which he needs in order to advance step by step in his long road through the ages. To the economists belongs the glory of perceiving great laws; but these laws are designed to be applied not to purely physical phenomena, but to free and impassioned beings: they are, besides, designed to be combined in the real world with other not less essential laws, — the laws which divide the human race into distinct nationalities. Altogether incontestable as their abstract evidence may be, their application, modified by elements of another nature, can never, therefore, be effected, except according to the wholly contingent rules of probability.

It is chimerical to pretend to apply *evidence* to government, and to seek its absolute type,¹ when the boldest political philosophers, Rousseau himself, acknowledge government modifiable according to times and places. The political science of the economists is the annihilation of all science and all political experiment. The admirable studies of Montesquieu and Rousseau are to them null and void. Their formula of government, in its inconceivable naïveté, is summed up in one sentence, — despotism tempered by a mad-house: a very different despotism, it must be admitted, from that of Louis XIV. and all known despots; for with them, the *government of evidence* once well defined and well constituted, the prince who should do violence in any way to property, including individual liberty and all its applications, would *evidently* be mad, and would be no longer entitled to obedience.

There is in their *rational despotism* more than an abuse of logic: there is a lack of logic. They were certainly hurried away, unknowingly perhaps, both by the old monarchical habits, and the desire to convert the established power; for, had they reasoned with full independence and full rigor, they would have arrived, not at despotism, but at unlimited political liberty, or rather at *anarchy*, in the etymological sense of the word. What would be the use of a government if we were in possession of *evidence*, — if *pure reason* reigned among men? It would only be necessary to have schools to instruct the rising generation in *evidence*, and a marshalsea to put the madmen who might attack *evidence* in a condition to do no harm. Eminent economists of the following period, more consistent than Quesnai, Dupont de Nemours, or Lemercier de La Rivière, if they did not reach this extremity indeed, at least arrived at the point of considering government as a *necessary evil*, the action of which should be restricted within the narrowest possible limits. These are the very words of Jean-Baptiste Say.

It was again by the confusion of the absolute and the relative, by the exclusive investigation of a single phase of truth, that the economists, who had just before proclaimed despotism, at least in words, came to the point of disregarding the rights and interests of the State. "To imagine," said Turgot, "that there are some articles which the State should strive to make the earth pro-

¹ This type, according to them, was realized four thousand years ago in China; and they trusted that a *great empress* was about to offer a second example in Russia! — See Dupont de Nemours, *Origine et progrès d'une science nouvelle*; ap. *Physiocrates*, part i. p. 364.

duce rather than others, that it should establish certain manufactures rather than others, and, in consequence, prohibit certain productions while ordering others, . . . establish certain manufactures at the expense of the public treasury, and heap privileges and favors upon them, is grossly to mistake the true advantages of commerce: it is to forget, that as no commercial operation can be any thing but reciprocal, to desire to sell every thing to foreigners, and to buy nothing from them, is absurd. We only gain by producing one commodity rather than another, inasmuch as this commodity brings more money, after deducting all expenses, to him who produced it from his land or manufactured it. The market value of each commodity, therefore, all expenses deducted, is the only rule by which to judge of the advantage derived by the State from a certain species of production: consequently, every kind of manufacture which does not indemnify with a profit the costs which it requires is of no advantage, and the sums which are employed in supporting it, despite the natural course of commerce, are a tax imposed upon the nation to no purpose."¹

These principles are very true abstractly in an economic point of view; but as economy must necessarily be combined with politics, their literal application may be erroneous and perilous in certain cases. It may be to the interest of the State not to be dependent upon another State for certain commodities or merchandise; and it may be, that, in increasing its safety by the measures which it takes to secure the national production of this merchandise, it indirectly owes happy economic results to measures contrary to the general principles of economy. The State likewise effects a bad economic operation as to direct production by establishing certain costly manufactures; but if these manufactures develop taste, and give a useful impulse and example to industry, the State will derive advantage from it. Again: in the same manner, a great State should secure a marine at any price: if differential duties are temporarily necessary for this, it acts rightly in establishing or maintaining them.

Concerning the important questions of wealth, taxation, and the hierarchy of the social classes, the economists err by drawing arbitrary conclusions from a hackneyed axiom, by a specious and subtle mode of deduction. Because the earth, fructified by the labor of man, is the source of all wealth,² to conclude that manu-

¹ *Éloge de Gournai*; ap. *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. I. p. 274; Guillaumin, 1844.

² *Matter*, and not *the earth*, should be said; for the axiom is false, taken literally. Fishery is a source of wealth, as well as husbandry and pasturage.

factures add no value to this first value, that the industrial and commercial classes are sterile, and that taxation should be levied on the income from real estate alone, is, in reality, to sacrifice that landed property which is glorified to those manufactures which are disparaged. The net revenue, in common parlance, the language of good sense, is not the income from real estate, but all revenue, all profit that exceeds the cost of labor, including in the cost the subsistence of the laborer. The net revenue, whatever may be its origin, may be lawfully subjected to taxation.¹ As to the distinction between the productive class and the sterile class, a single observation suffices to show all its chimericalness. The man that buys and the man that drives the plough would belong to the productive class; the man that manufactures it, to the sterile class! Quesnai and all the school fall far behind Gournai, who gave perfectly sound definitions on these subjects. "The only real riches of the State," he said, "are the annual yield of its lands, and the manufactures of its inhabitants. A workman who manufactures a piece of cloth adds real wealth to the mass of the wealth of the State. The sum which the State may annually apply to its needs is always an aliquot part of the sum of the revenues which are annually produced in the State; and the sum of these revenues is composed of the net revenue of each estate, and the product of the manufacture of each individual."

Gournai, however, strange to say, was induced to share Quesnai's opinion, that the taxes are always paid by the landed proprietor in the end, and that taxation should be levied exclusively on real estate. He was not consistent with his doctrine concerning the reality of the wealth produced by manufactures. This inconsistency was not rectified in the French economic school: the honor thereof belongs to a foreigner, the illustrious Adam Smith. The Scotch philosopher, adopted by the French economists of the following generation, showed the principle of value in the labor of man, whether applied immediately or not to the soil; reëstablished in principle, in the new science, the equal fruitfulness of the different applications of labor and the legitimate participation of the different kinds of revenue in the burdens of the State; and ad-

¹ It is incorrect to say that the holder of floating capital can *always* find, in the increase of the interest on his money, a compensation for the tax required of him by the State. The capitalist does not *always* dictate the law to the borrower, any more than the contractor *always* dictates the law to those in his pay. This depends on a variable proportion between the supply and the demand.

² *Éloge de Gournai*; ap. *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. I. pp. 266, 273, 274.



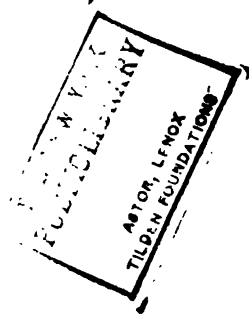
Engraved by W. H. H.

ADAM SMITH.

*From a Medallion executed in the life time
of Adam Smith by Tassie.*

Under the Superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

London: Published by Charles Knight, Ludgate Street.



mitted lastly, in certain limits, the modification of economic principles for reasons of State.¹

Quesnai and his disciples also professed dangerous maxims concerning large farming, foreign commerce, and wages. They extolled large farming exclusively, and the system of minimum labor; yet this system has depopulated the rural districts of England to accumulate an immense population in the cities! They pretended that foreign and maritime commerce is not profitable to a nation; that the wealth of the merchants is not national wealth: yet the English merchants have saved England half a score of times with their riches! The interest of society does not consist in deriving the largest possible revenue from the soil so much as in causing the greatest possible number of men to live from the soil and on the soil.² The strongest community is that in which small farmers, sufficiently enlightened to combine their labor in certain cases and on certain lands, are the prevailing element.³ It is needless to say that this element, nevertheless, should be counterbalanced by a sufficient body of manufacturers, who would exchange their manufactures for the products of the soil. The sentiment of Quesnai was correct in this respect, though his formulas were bad; for he admits that the agriculturists should be in the proportion of two to one to the merchants and manufacturers, in a well-constituted state of society.

As to wages, Quesnai and Turgot claim that the mechanic does not produce more than his subsistence, which logically leads to

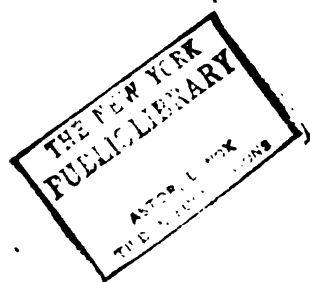
¹ Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (published in England in 1776, and translated into French in 1781).

² The axiom of Quesnai, moreover, is arbitrary: the reciprocal advantages of large and small farming counterbalance each other in conformity with all kinds of moral and physical circumstances. The excellent studies of M. H. Passy may be consulted on this subject.

³ Rousseau had rightly seen this; and a singular man, a compound of the innovating and the retrogressive and feudal spirit, who had commenced an outline of political economy on his own account at the same time with Gournai and Quesnai, the Marquis de Mirabeau, had at first preached small farming in conformity with the traditions and habits of the French rural districts; but he was converted by Quesnai, and thenceforth employed himself in diluting the common doctrines of the school in an immense, confused medley, interspersed with many luminous flashes which no one has the courage to seek therein to-day. From this chaos was to be born the great Mirabeau, the pupil and victim of a father who was the *friend of men* in general, and the tyrant of his family in particular. The works of the Marquis de Mirabeau most quoted are the *l'Ami des hommes* (1756); the *Théorie de l'impôt* (1760), which cost him a brief imprisonment in the Bastille; and the *Philosophie rurale* (1763). As to the theory of *dear bread*, it should not be imputed as a reproach to Quesnai: he only meant thereby that the price of grain should not be artificially lowered, and the agricultural producer prevented from obtaining a just remuneration.

granting him no more than he produces ; and they maintain, that in point of fact, through competition, he will never earn much beyond his mere subsistence. The principle is false, and the result would be an act of social iniquity. It is not only humanity, but strict justice, which demands that the mechanic shall earn more than his subsistence. Has not he, too, made advances, which should be refunded to him in wages ? — the advance of the time and subsistence expended in learning his trade, and waiting for work, the advance for tools, etc. The maxims of the first economists, rigorously carried out, would react from the mechanic upon the husbandman, from the master-manufacturer upon the master-agriculturist himself, and would end in concentrating in the hands of the land-owner all the surplus of the production over the consumption. Nothing was certainly farther from their intentions ; but they had become involved, by their unhappy definition of wealth, in a vicious circle, from which escape was impossible. "The poorest citizens should possess a competence," says Quesnai, "in order that they may be able to consume, and to aid reproduction by consumption." This is evident, but contrary to the preceding propositions. At the bottom, these just and humane men were devoted to the interests of the masses. Gournai, Quesnai, and Turgot were convinced that the systems opposed to economic liberty, to the free use of the individual faculties, "always favor the wealthy and indolent portion of the community, to the detriment of the poor and laborious portion." Dupont de Nemours went so far as to say that men are much more unfortunate in badly organized systems of civilization, in which the natural laws are disregarded, than they were in the primitive state of association, because, in these imperfectly civilized communities, the small number of the rich unceasingly makes inroads upon the property of the great number of the poor.¹

¹ *Physiocratie ; Discours de l'éditeur*, p. 33. An important fact proves how far these energetic defenders of property were from wishing to sacrifice the interests of the masses to those of the land-owners. In 1789, when the gratuitous abolition of the tithes was proposed, Dupont de Nemours, the commentator and successor of Quesnai, rose, by the side of Sieyès, to dissuade the Assembly from making this immense gift to the land-owners at the expense of the nation, and demanded the redemption of the tithes, and the appropriation of the price of this redemption to purposes of social interest. Dupont desired this to be devoted to the payment of the debts of the State. We do not think that this was the most legitimate use of it. The property of the Church was originally the property of the poor, the great common property of the Christians. It was just to restore it to its destination, and to make the tithes the budget of the lower classes, the endowment for primary instruction and public assistance, the foundation of a fund for the needy and superannuated, and for all the measures destined to lessen the effects of the inevitable inequality of property.





TURGOT.

*From an original Picture in the
Gallery of the Louvre.*

We have attempted to analyze the doctrines of the physiocrats: we shall presently find them attempting to convert their ideas into realities, and to prevent the approaching era of revolution by a peaceful transformation. Before resuming the narrative of the last years of the monarchy, we will pause for a few moments at a man who was to direct this attempt at reform, and to be the principal glory of the economic school, but who, without being exempt from errors, too great to be wholly absorbed by any sect, attached himself at once to all that was good and true in the different tendencies of the eighteenth century. Turgot, the statesman of the economists, was distinguished from his fellows, not because he deemed their theory too bold, but because, on the contrary, he possessed a broader theory. Like them, he admitted complete liberty in the individual, and unity in the ruling power; but he did not apprehend this unity under a single, and, what was worse, an inferior form. He was not one to adopt a chain of reasoning ending in the odious deduction of despotism. He did not believe it possible to realize, at a single stroke and forever, the indefinite progress of the human race. *Evidence*, that mathematical vision of the economists, was transformed in him into an enlightened faith in the improvement of reason. Turgot was not, doubtless, the strongest and most intelligent genius, but he was perhaps the most comprehensive mind, of all the eighteenth century. The other economists, despite their pretensions to general philosophy, were specialists: he was a philosopher in every acceptance of the word, a man of perfect sight. Something altogether essential to the history of modern ideas would be lacking if we did not study the philosopher in Turgot before following the politician through the course of events. One of the first places in the imposing gallery of the eighteenth century belongs to this beautiful and noble figure, at once so sympathetic and so austere, so placid and so energetic. After so many and such brilliant discussions, the most general conclusion was given by Turgot.

The youngest of the great thinkers of the age, Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot, was born at Paris, May 10, 1727, of a father who had long honorably filled the office of *prévôt-des-marchands*.¹ Destined at first for the Church, he was transferred from the Jesuits of Louis-le-Grand to the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice, then to the Sorbonne. A mature man in childhood, he was already what he

¹ It was the *prévôt* Michel Turgot that constructed the great sewer on the right bank; rebuilt the Pont au Change of stone; engraved the great plan of Paris, a masterpiece of its kind, &c.

was to be throughout his life. Alike removed from a blind submission to the belief of his masters and a blind reaction against all belief, he had, from his earliest youth, but two cares, the public good and science, — science in its universality. At twenty-one (1748), he addressed to Buffon the objections of a profound physicist to certain parts of his still unpublished system; at twenty-two (1749), before knowing Gournai or Quesnai, he wrote to one of his friends upon one of the most important questions of political economy, paper-money, a letter which unanswerably refuted the theory of Law, in which he showed the essential difference between metallic currency, a value which is the common standard of other values, and the money of credit, — a simple sign, a mere promise, without intrinsic value; and proved the absurdity of a system which undertook to replace taxation by periodical issues of paper-money, the speedy depreciation of this money, and all the disorder that would ensue. After this letter, the compulsory currency of paper-money might still be supported as a *political* measure in certain extraordinary cases; but it was impossible to support it as an *economic* measure.

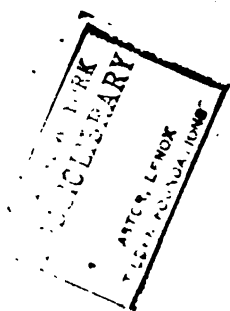
The year after (1750), he delivered, in the capacity of Prior of the Sorbonne, two discourses such as these Gothic arches had never heard: not that they caused the noise and scandal made shortly afterwards by the Abbé de Prades; but they were the philosophy of history, shedding a serene light on the obscure refuge of scholasticism.

The first of these discourses set forth "the advantages which the establishment of Christianity has procured for the human race." These were the moral amelioration of man and society; the progress of humanity and justice in private, public, and international relations; and the introduction of the principle of the love of God into the world.¹ He refuted in advance Rousseau's exaggerated admiration of the wholly artificial society of Sparta, and criticised the legislators who had rendered permanent the errors of their age by seeking to make their laws irrevocable, and who had almost all neglected to make arrangements for necessary corrections, leaving no other resource than that of revolution.

¹ Christianity has greatly developed this principle, and made it the very groundwork of religion: but Turgot's assertion is nevertheless too absolute; the love of God must not be wholly denied to antiquity. Turgot does not say a word that he did not think; but, in the presence of the Sorbonne, he could not say all that he thought. "I recognize," he wrote elsewhere, "the good that Christianity has done the world; but the greatest of its blessings has been the enlightenment and propagation of natural religion." — *Lettres sur la Tolérance*, ap. *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 687.



VUE DE LA SORBONNE



This was the condemnation of all constitutions which did not contain within themselves provisions for their amendment.

The second discourse had for its subject "the successive progress of the human mind." This was the historical elaboration of the great speech of Pascal. But Turgot did not limit indefinite progress to knowledge: he extended it to human morality, thus protesting against the negation of Rousseau at the very moment when it was enunciated by the latter. Turgot made an exception only with respect to the fine arts. "The knowledge of nature and truth is infinite, like themselves. The arts, the object of which is to please us, are limited like us: they have a fixed point of perfection determined by the genius of languages, the imitation of Nature, and the sensibility of our organs." Nevertheless, he admits that poetry, perfect among the ancients as to imagery and style, is susceptible of continual progress on other points. It is the same with the other arts: their domain extends with man himself.

We cannot behold without admiration this seminarist of twenty-three tracing with a bold hand the sketch of universal history, no longer in view of special tradition, like Bossuet, but of the whole human race, like Voltaire, and with a dignity and moral authority in which Voltaire was too often lacking. The *Essay on the Manners of Nations* was still unpublished in 1750: it is necessary to remember this to authenticate the originality of Turgot's work. The only serious objection to be made to Turgot is, that, influenced by the metaphysics of sensation, he saw in progress too much the result of external phenomena, and not enough the manifestation of the internal energies of man.

Immense plans were in agitation in this youthful brain: he wished to elaborate every thing contained in the germ in his two discourses; he wished to rewrite the *Universal History* of Bossuet in the philosophic point of view, and to make it only the first part of a vast whole, including besides a *Treatise on Political Geography* and a *Treatise on Government*; he wished to show "the human race always the same in its convulsions, like the waters of the sea, and continually advancing towards perfection."

We possess detailed plans of the first two parts. In the *Political Geography*, he makes very great, even excessive reservations, in opposition to the principle of Montesquieu touching the *influence of climate*; "an unknown influence," he says. "We must have exhausted moral causes to have a right to assert any thing

concerning the physical influence of climate."¹ He clearly perceives Montesquieu's error with respect to the *excessive population* of the barbarous North. He throws out grand views concerning the means which should be sought by the human race to derive the greatest possible advantage from our globe by the combination of the different principles which compose the soil (mineral fertilizers), the distribution of waters, etc.

The sketch of the *Universal History* is marked with the boldest optimism. "It is well that the passions reigned before reason in politics; for reason would have been less powerful had it reigned sooner. As it is justice itself, it would have prevented war, and, with war, the formation of great States, and consequently the progress of ideas, arts, and *polity*, or the art of government. The human race would forever have remained in mediocrity. Reason and justice would have rendered every thing immutable. Now, what is never perfect should never be entirely immutable. The stormy and dangerous passions have become a source of action, and consequently of progress. Every thing that draws men from their condition, every thing that places varied scenes before their eyes, extends their ideas, enlightens them, animates them, and, in the end, leads them to goodness and truth, to which they are attracted by their natural inclination. The universe, thus viewed as a whole, in all the connection and extent of its progress, is the most glorious spectacle to the Wisdom that presides over it."

There is nothing greater in the eighteenth century than this argument between Turgot and Rousseau on the destiny of the human race.

In every line are met sagacious and profound glances at the principal phenomena of history. "The inequality between the sexes is in proportion to the barbarism: it is extreme in despotic States. The condition of women is improved in republics. It is in petty States and republics that the science of government is

¹ It is in this same sketch that the following passage is found: "Every nation that outstrips the rest in its progress becomes a kind of centre, around which a political world, so to speak, gathers, composed of the nations known to it, and whose interests combine with its own. Several of these worlds are formed throughout the extent of the globe, independent of each other, and mutually unknown. In spreading continually on all sides, they encounter and become confounded with each other, until finally the knowledge of the whole universe, the political science of which will succeed in combining all the parts, will form but a single political world, the limits of which will be blended with those of the physical world."

This is all history summed up in a few lines! — *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 616.

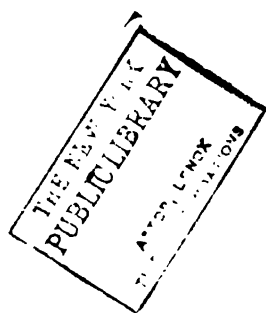
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Peint par L. Tocque

*Craffigny / Françoise d'Ardenne d'Appenweert.
dame de Craffigny.*

Surgraphie et Contour par le Graveur



formed, that equality is preserved, that the human mind makes rapid progress," etc.

The equality of rights is here in question; for elsewhere he justifies as a condition of progress, and without disregarding its fatal consequences in so many respects, the social inequality produced by the division of labor. He acknowledges, however, that this necessary division makes it impossible for the majority of mankind, occupied with obscure and rude labor, to follow the progress of other men. This is the terrible problem which he does not solve, and the strongest argument of Rousseau. It is this social inequality, which, after having effected the progress of enlightenment, oftenest at the expense of justice, prevents this progress from being fruitful to mankind in general, puts obstacles in the way of the maintenance or establishment of political liberty and equality,¹ and too often produces or brings back despotism; an inequality which will some time, perhaps, find its remedy in what aggravates it to-day, — the extension of man's means of action upon Nature. Machinery, which subjugates man, may one day enfranchise him.

A last page is characteristic, — the picture of the difficult duties of the legislator in the existing state of Europe. Nevertheless, he concludes, "It is so true that the interests of nations and the success of a good government may be reduced to a religious respect for personal liberty and labor, the inviolable preservation of the rights of property, and justice for all, . . . that there is reason to hope that the science of government will one day become easy. . . . The tour of the (political) world is yet to be made: truth is on the way; and glory, and the happiness of being useful, are at the end."

The destiny of Turgot is found in this page: he was to attempt to become this legislator.

We have seen Turgot opposing, partially in advance, the two *Dissertations* of Rousseau. In a letter addressed to a female author, Madame de Graffigni, and which was not designed for publicity, he, on the contrary, surpasses *Émile*: he attacks the inverted system of education, which begins with abstractions, and which fetters the children whom Nature attracts to herself by every means. "Put children in the midst of Nature," he exclaims in these few pages, in which he seems to sum up the first idea of the immortal work of the Genevese (1751). On marriages

¹ "Liberty," I say with a sigh, "men are not perhaps worthy of thee! Equality, they desire, but can never attain thee!" — *Lettre à madame de Graffigni*, 1751, ap. *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 786.

of interest, maxims opposed to marriages of *inclination*, and other prejudices of this kind, which are prejudicial to morals and the family, and, in general, on every thing relating to morality or sentiment, we seem to be listening to Rousseau.¹

Other private letters, happily preserved, and which are true dogmatic treatises, show the groundwork of the youthful sage's ideas concerning the rights and duties of the State with respect to religion. These are the *Letters on Tolerance* (1753-1754), an improper title; for the liberty of creeds is not to him *tolerance*, but positive right. No religion, according to him, has a right to the exclusive protection of the State: all have a right to liberty, unless their dogmas or forms of worship are contrary to the interests of the State. He hastens to explain this restriction, which might easily be abused, by saying that a dogma should be tolerated, even though it be somewhat contrary to the good of the State, provided that it is not subversive of the foundation of society. A false religion will fall sooner by the progress of reason and peaceful investigation than by persecution, which rouses its believers to fanaticism: its ministers, at least, will be forced to become inconsistent, and to soften their dogmas to such a degree as to render them harmless. He thus corrects in advance the exaggerations of the *Social Contract*, which would prescribe the application to intolerant creeds of their own maxims, and their expulsion from the State.

After affirming that society, founded with a view to the common interests of men during the present life, has neither a right to impose on its members a rule or religion with a view to the future life, nor to interdict it to them, except in the case before cited, he admits, however, that society owes to the people a religious education, and that it is wisdom in legislators to choose a system of religion to offer, not to prescribe, to the uncertainty of the majority of men, while protecting the full liberty of other sects. He seeks the conditions which should be presented by this religion of State; does not find them in Roman Catholicism: doubts whether Protestantism, even Arminianism, although preferable in political respects, altogether fulfils them as yet; and asks whether natural religion, formed into a system and accom-

¹ And also on the limits of paternal rights. "In things in which the happiness of children is in question, the duties of fathers are confined to simple advice. It is the contrary way of thinking that has made so many unhappy *for their own good*, produced so many forced marriages, to say nothing of vocations, etc. — See the second *Letter on Tolerance*. The civil code has realized Turgot's idea.

panied with a form of worship, in defending less ground, would not be more unassailable.¹

Here Turgot, in his turn, exceeds the limits which Rousseau would set, and which are the true ones. Society owes instruction to children as it owes justice to men: it holds from God, its first author, since he made man social, the right and duty of taking, for the basis of its instruction and laws, *natural* religion; that is, the religious morality and general beliefs which are the very foundation of the human conscience and the foundation of order in this world: but it is not competent to establish a positive religion, a form of worship with priests and rites, for the purpose of giving a definite form to religious feeling. This exceeds the domain of public right: it needs a mysterious inspiration which is not at the disposal of the body politic.

Never were the principles of right, justice, and liberty, more nobly expressed than in the second of these *Letters*. Never was all right more proudly denied to positive laws which are contrary to equity. "Intolerance is tyranny, and exceeds the right of the prince, like all unjust laws. If the subjects of an intolerant prince, as of any other tyrant, are able to resist him, their rebellion is just. The principle that nothing should limit the rights of society over the individual, except the greatest good of society, appears to me false and dangerous. Every man is born free: and it is never lawful to fetter this liberty, unless it degenerates into license; that is, unless it ceases to be liberty by becoming usurpation. The different kinds of liberty, like the different kinds of property, are limited by each other. The liberty of acting without injury to another can only be restricted by tyrannical laws. Governments are too much in the habit always of sacrificing the happiness of individuals to the pretended rights of society. It is forgotten that society was made for individuals; that it was instituted only to protect the rights of all by insuring the accomplishment of all the mutual duties."²

¹ Compare this with the correspondence between Voltaire and Frederick, of 1766, on the possibility of a *deistical* religion.

² In a letter written long after, he attacks "the falsity of that hackneyed notion of almost all republican writers, that liberty consists in being submissive to the laws alone, as if a man oppressed by an unjust law were free."

This notion is relatively true if the despotic State, in which one man is subject to another, is compared with the republican State, in which he is subject only to a general and abstract law; but it is absolutely true only where the *positive laws* are in conformity with the eternal laws. — See the letter to Dr. Price, 1778; ap. *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 806.

There was a broad chasm between contemporaneous facts and the theories of Turgot. The young philosopher, with the generous confidence which always characterized him, did not believe it impossible to fill up this gulf. In 1754, in the height of the strife of the *certificates of confession*, among the quarrels of the parliament and the clergy, and the renewed persecutions of the Protestants, he printed anonymously a work entitled *The Conciliator*, which he sent to the councillors of State and the ministers, and caused to reach the King. He showed therein nothing of his principles but what was necessary for the practical end that he was pursuing. He made a distinction between ecclesiastical tolerance, which he acknowledged it to be impossible to require from priests, and civil tolerance, which he demanded as necessary from governments. The Prince, he said, is not the judge of sins towards God, but only of offences towards society. He desired, on the one hand, that the Protestants and the Jansenists should be tolerated, and that no difference should be made between them and other citizens; and, on the other, that the priests should not be forced to administer the sacraments against their will, but that, in order to be able to restore this liberty to the priests, the sacraments should be deprived of all civil value, and the authentication of births, marriages, and burials, should become independent of religious ceremonies. He demanded, in a word, before Voltaire, that foundation of the *civil status* which was to be realized by the institutions emanating from 1789.

It did not belong to the government of Louis XV. to accomplish such things: a feeble attempt at religious pacification in 1754 alone seemed to coincide with the work of Turgot.

Meanwhile, Turgot became associated in the *Encyclopædia* (about 1755). All his articles therein on widely different subjects, philology, metaphysics, physics, and public law, belong to the first rank in this vast collection. He displays profound knowledge, and views as ingenious as sagacious concerning the origin, mingling, and revolutions of languages (art. *Etymology*): in the article *Existence*, as in every thing of his which touches on metaphysics, without explicitly going beyond Condillac, he manifests tendencies analogous to those of Rousseau, which, had he applied his firm and lucid intellect more especially to the science of principles, would have probably led him to the point reached by La Romiguière half a century later. The article *Expansibility* contains, according to a competent judge, Condorcet, "a new system of physics, a system of mathematical physics founded on the principles and discoveries

of Newton.”¹ The article *Foundation* shows the theorist of liberty as firm concerning the true rights of the State as those of the individual. He sweeps away the sophisms by which it is attempted to transform fictitious beings, corporations, into proprietors, as if property were any thing else than an outgrowth of individuality, and as if there were room for a third right between the right of the individual and the right of society.² The government, he says, has an incontestable right “to dispose of ancient foundations, to appropriate their funds to new objects, or, still better, to abolish them altogether. Public utility is the highest law, and should not be weighed in the scale either with a superstitious respect for what is called *the intention of the founders* (as if ignorant and narrow individuals had a right to bind unborn generations by their capricious will), or by the fear of encroaching on the pretended rights of certain bodies; as if private bodies had any rights in opposition to the State. The citizens have rights, and sacred rights, as to the body of society itself; they exist independently of it; they are its necessary elements, and they enter it only to place themselves, with all their rights, under the protection of those same laws which insure their property and liberty. But private bodies exist neither by themselves nor for them: they have been formed for society, and they should cease to exist the moment that they cease to be useful.”

Such were the principles laid down: the Revolution had only to put them into practice.

Turgot did not continue his coöperation with the *Encyclopædia* to the end. The persecution which was renewed against this great work in 1759 arrested him. His manly courage and steadfast will shield him from all suspicion of weakness. If he was unwilling to become more deeply involved in the philosophic strife,³ it was be-

¹ He very clearly perceives here the use that may be made of steam, and this before the great applications of it by Watt.

² The only collective being which is in a separate category is society, because its existence is necessary and perpetual, and because it is the only partnership which should never become dissolved or settle its affairs. The jurists of the monarchy had, at heart, the same opinion: they recognized in law but two kinds of property, that of the State and that of individuals. “Ecclesiastics and other members of mortmain corporations have been in all ages reputed incapable of possessing any kind of real estate in our kingdom: it was this that gave the kings, our predecessors, reason to subject them to amortization-duties, to redeem them from this incapacity.” — Ordinance of October 14, 1703, cited by M. Laferrière, *Hist. du droit français*, t. II. p. 40.

³ He clearly proved to his friends that he had not abandoned them, when, in 1767, the Sorbonne took a fancy to condemn Marmontel’s *Belisarius* for propositions opposed to religious persecution. Of all the blows dealt on this occasion to the Sorbonne, the

cause he deemed himself called upon to render greater services in another character than that of a writer. The noble passion for action, the only passion that he had known, took possession of him; and he aspired already, perhaps, in his secret thoughts, to attempt to arrest the monarchy in its decline. As early as 1751, although the younger son of a noble Norman family, and consequently without fortune,¹ he had renounced the dignities and wealth which seemed promised him in the ecclesiastical profession. He was not a man to weigh his conscience and his fortune against each other. His virtuous ambition opened for him another path. He made the magistracy a stepping-stone to the council of State. Made master of requests in 1753, he was appointed, in 1761, to the intendancy of Limousin, where he was enabled to make a trial at leisure of his faculties for statesmanship, and to prepare himself for a mission more brilliant, but not more worthy of respect; for he was for thirteen years the benefactor of this province, where he presented the true ideal of an administrator.

His love of science and literature never cooled; but he was forced to abandon his vast historical and philosophical plans. He concentrated his theoretical labors upon a single branch of science, political economy, in which he thought that he saw a great chance of safety for the decaying system of society. His *Reflections on the Formation and Distribution of Wealth* appeared in 1769. This was the best written and the most lasting of all the books produced by the French economists. Save on the point, essential, it is true, of the *productiveness* of industrial labor, Turgot laid down all the principles that were to be elaborated by Adam Smith. His *Memorial on the Loaning of Money*, 1769, treated in detail of the question of interest already decided in the preceding work. He unanswerably refuted the doctrines of the scholastic theologians, adopted by the jurists under the pressure of the canon law, and their subtleties ending in the absurd expedient of the creation of annuities and the alienation of capital:² he showed

rudest was that of its former fellow Turgot. He set opposite each other, in two parallel columns, the propositions censured by the Sorbonne and the opposite propositions, the tacit approval of which by the Sorbonne followed from the condemnation of the others. It was impossible to imagine any thing more odious or absurd. — See *Mém. de Marmontel*, t. III. p. 45.

¹ The right of primogeniture was very rigorously maintained in the local law of Normandy.

² This system was one of the causes of the commercial and industrial inferiority of Catholic countries. The absurdity consisted in this, that, if interest was not lawful, the borrower at five per cent should have been released at the expiration of twenty years: perpetual annuities were, in this case, perpetual usury from the day when the

how the laws against loans at interest were circumvented, eluded, and overthrown by the force of circumstances; and made a clear distinction between the question of beneficence and Christian charity, and that of property, right, and liberty,—two domains of truth, not contrary, but distinct. The problem has been and is still discussed anew, with more warmth and obstinacy than ever. Powerful dialecticians have sought arguments to oppose to those of Turgot and his school in natural and social right, and in political economy turned against itself; but they have not succeeded in proving that it is possible to abolish loans at interest without dealing a death-blow to freedom of business transactions and the formation of capital, and consequently to the national wealth, and without attacking the essence of property.

As to the limitation of the rate of interest by law, Turgot and the other economists condemned all interference of the State, and it is difficult to deny the theoretical value of their sentence; but it is equally difficult not to perceive that the legislation which maintains the limitation of interest according to an approximate average has few practical objections, or, at least, that its abolition would, perhaps, long present much more serious objections.

Among the economic works of Turgot must also be cited his admirable *Memorial on Mines and Quarries*, in which he shows himself alike superior both to the legislation of his times, and, at least with respect to logic, to that which was to replace it.¹

borrower had reimbursed the capital in annual instalments. It is strange to see what may be the empire of tradition, even over good minds. Pothier, so learned, so upright, and so enlightened in so many other respects, but timid in every thing bordering on theology, showed incredible weakness on this subject, and found nothing but truly *Sorbonnic* quibbles.

¹ Ancient legislation, in accordance with the Roman imperial law, reserved the ownership of mines to the crown, as a royal right: in point of fact, the State did not work them, but granted monopolies of them with all the usual abuses. The present legislation begins by laying down the fictitious principle, that the ownership of the soil carries with it the ownership of whatever is above and below the surface (Civil Code, art. 552); then, in the special law concerning mines (the law of 1810), reduces this ownership, which it has just exaggerated so strangely in theory, to very little in practice, in behalf of the State. Turgot, with altogether different logic, asserts that there is no natural relation between the ownership of a field and that of a mine beneath it; that the owner has the exclusive right of making excavations in his own field, but that, if he finds a mine, it belongs to him, not as the extension of his property, but through his right as the first occupant; and that if he is anticipated in this occupancy by another excavation commenced in another field, and continued under his own by a subterranean way, he cannot protest against it.

Relatively to the State, it is the same below as above the surface. Society may continue the joint possession of the surface; it may continue the joint possession of the estate: but, so long as it has not done this by positive law, the right of the first occupant is

Turgot would employ the closing years of the reign of Louis XV. in beginning the application of his doctrines, according to his power, on a small scale, and in striving to imbue the central government with this influence. The thinker and the practical man were combined in him: we shall soon find also the politician contending with events. The thinker is comprised entire in the two words, *liberty* and *perfectibility*. We shall have occasion to recur to the hiatus which existed in the application of his doctrine to political liberty,—an hiatus much less, however, than in the other economists. As to perfectibility, his friend and disciple Condorcet has summed up his ideas in a few lines: “Turgot regarded indefinite perfectibility as one of the distinctive qualities of the human species. . . . This perfectibility appeared to him to belong to the human race in general, and to each individual in particular. He believed, for instance, that the progress of physical knowledge, of education, and of method in the sciences, or the discovery of new methods, would contribute to improve the organization, and to render men capable of retaining more ideas in their memory, and of multiplying the combinations of these ideas. He believed that their moral sense was equally susceptible of improvement. According to these principles, all truths useful to mankind would, in the end, be known and adopted by all men; and all the old errors would be destroyed by degrees, and be replaced by new truths. This progress, constantly increasing from age to age, has no limit, or one that it is absolutely impossible to fix in our present state of enlightenment. He was convinced that the improvement of order and society would necessarily produce an improvement not less important in morality; that men would continually become better in proportion as they were more enlightened.”¹

To sum up Turgot completely, it is necessary to sum up all the ideas of the age. In tolerance and humanity, he was Voltaire; in religion, morality, and education, he was Rousseau; in political economy, he was Gournai and Quesnai: in liberty, he was Voltaire, and, with him, again Gournai and Quesnai; in metaphysics, he was Condillac, with a higher tendency; in perfectibility, he was more and better than Voltaire and Diderot,—he was the only one that seriously responded to Rousseau. Rousseau strengthened the faith of the individual man in his immortal destinies, but dis-

the most natural, provided that this first occupant gives the necessary guarantees to society. It is needless to say that the State retains, with respect to the first occupant and the owner of the surface, the exceptional right of expropriation for public use.

¹ Condorcet, *Vie de Turgot*, p. 273.

turbed the social man by pointing out to him moral decay in intellectual and material progress. Turgot, without by any means solving all the profound objections of Rousseau, consoled and reassured men. He gave the perfectibility of the encyclopedists the only firm basis by uniting it with the spiritualistic Deism of Rousseau, and thus found the point of union between the two opposite schools.¹ A less brilliant, less impetuous, but more universal genius than his great contemporaries, he marked the culmination of the human mind in the eighteenth century, and closed that philosophic age with a hymn of hope and immortality over the already yawning grave of ancient society!

Turgot was inferior only on a single point,—politics proper: on the one hand, the principle of the unproductiveness of manufactures led him to disregard the political rights of those who were not land-owners; on the other hand, after the example of his friends the economists, he disregarded the essential distinctions laid down by Montesquieu and Rousseau, and copied what may be called the national error of D'Argenson in confounding the unity of the ruling power with the unity of sovereignty.² His excessive confidence in the empire of reason, goodness, and justice, prevented him from seeing how incompatible this unity is with liberty. He, who cherished liberty before all things, offered fewer practical means of securing it than Rousseau, who has been reproached with sacrificing it to equality.

The glory of Turgot, as a whole, belongs only to France and to philosophy: nevertheless, part of this glory was common to him and his masters of the economic group. The respect of posterity is justly due to the men who propounded these great maxims:—

It does not belong to the government to make laws, but only to recognize the natural laws.

That is to say, the function of society, like that of man, is to accept and voluntarily concur in the laws of Providence.

No human authority has a right to do violence to Nature.

That is to say, every law contrary to Nature, to justice, to morality, and to the revelation of God in the human conscience,—every law contrary to *law* is lawfully null and void. There can be no right contrary to right.

¹ The problem of perfectibility does not find its solution, indeed, any more than that of optimism, in this isolated, present life. The encyclopedists were unable to solve it; they who saw only the perfectibility of the species in this world, and not the perfectibility of the individual soul in the future life.

² See his letter to Dr. Price, 1778.

They mingled errors with the truths which they proclaimed, all of which were not shared by Turgot. Deluded by their chimera of *evidence*, they did not see that political liberty and equality are the condition of all other liberties; and their denial of political science, and the formula of governmental despotism so strangely invented by these champions of economic liberty, were a fatal example to the sects that have since taken up social questions from the point of view opposed to *liberal* economy, and that have too often shown an indifference to political liberty more logical in fatalistic schools than in a school of free personality.

They were mistaken in imagining it possible to attain the absolute; but they none the less determined the end towards which society was progressively to advance. If, in fact, it is asked, "Are we to aspire to economic liberty or to restrictions, to peaceful free trade, or to the contention of tariffs, the parent of commercial warfare,¹ to harmony or antagonism?" can the reply be doubtful? It is with universal free trade as with universal peace: each is an ideal, and not a chimera; a final end, which we are to seek to approach as nearly as possible, although we are never destined, perhaps, to attain it completely.

The economists were right in desiring liberty: it may even be said that they did not desire it sufficiently, or, at least, did not sufficiently define the means necessary to obtain it. A good government ought not only to *respect* liberty, as Turgot says, but to *insure* it. Society should insure the free development of the faculties of each of its members by public instruction,² by protection accorded to the weak, to *minors* in age or condition, and by restrictions prescribing morality, hygiene, and justice in manufactures; the only legitimate ones on this subject. It should repair, as far as possible, by institutions, the effects of the inevitable factitious inequality due to hereditary transmission,—an inequality so often in an inverse ratio to that of natural capabilities. If it is untrue that mechanics *ought* not to earn any more than their subsistence, it is true, that, in point of fact, the majority do not earn any more than this, *even if they earn as much*, and that, in general, they earn much less than they *produce*. Society owes them all

¹ To what Turgot calls "the puerile and sanguinary delusion of exclusive trade."—*Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 802.

² The physiocrats by no means denied this truth. All the eighteenth century, without distinction of school, demanded public instruction from the State. We should guard against ascribing to the first economists the responsibility of the aberrations of certain of their successors.

the reparation and compensation compatible with the liberty and rights of others. Liberty, lastly, requires society to secure the field to honorable manufactures against fraudulent competition. Liberty requires the State to protect individual competition against monopoly; in other terms, the State should do or regulate all that cannot be done by free competition. It is for the State to prepare, level, and keep in order the ground on which these competitors are to run their race; it is for the State to moderate the too violent collision of free forces on this ground; it is for the State to insure the liberty of each by the authority of all.

When, after journeying in detail over the immense field of the philosophy of the eighteenth century, we ascend to its highest point to embrace with a glance the whole movement of minds, setting aside contradictions, individual caprices, and accessory ideas, we distinguish three principal currents of social ideas, which may be styled the two systems of democracy and liberalism. One of the two democratic schools desired to purify, restrain, simplify, and strengthen man: it rejected temporal and aristocratic royalty as unjust and demoralizing, and spiritual royalty as incompatible with reason and with man's personal responsibility towards God. The other school demanded the unrestrained growth of all the human inclinations, without making any distinction between the essential and the artificial, the simple and the composite passions; and rejected the old authorities only in common with all restraint whatsoever. The one considered the sovereignty of the people as proceeding from the true divine right; that is, the individual as subject to the people, the people to God, justice, morality, and universal charity. The other admitted of no other law above man than an inevitable and necessary progress, and ended in the absolute sovereignty of strength or numbers: it would see little more in the Revolution than the conquest of material enjoyment for the disinherited children of earth; while the first would seek therein, above all, the conquest of political equality and human dignity. The spiritualistic democracy would be too much inclined to restrict, with a view to equality and moral reformation, that individual growth which the second school would suffer to run riot with one hand, while stifling it with the other by the law of numbers. It was reserved for the third, the liberal school, to define liberty, no longer by fact, but by right; to deduce it from the moral responsibility laid down by the spiritualistic democracy, and to limit it only by the liberty of others. In the fatalistic sects would be found the great obstacle to the tri-

umph and definitive organization of the Revolution. The modern times would not be fulfilled until the fatalistic school, disguised under so many forms, by turns mystical and materialistic, yielded before the double principle of divine and human personality, and comprehended that he who seeks nothing but bread for the body does not even find this bread. They would not be fulfilled until liberalism and democracy were confounded in a broader doctrine, under one of those blasts of religious inspiration which regenerate the world.

CHAPTER IV.

LOUIS XV. (CONCLUDED.)

CHOISEUL'S MINISTRY. Trial of Father La Valette. Official Reports concerning the Constitutions of the Jesuits. **THE JESUITS SUPPRESSED IN FRANCE.** Abolition of the Order by Pope Clement XIV. Contention between the Court and the Parliaments. Death of Madame de Pompadour. Invasion of the Economists in Politics. First Experiments of Commercial and Industrial Freedom. New Quarrels with the Parliaments. Trial of La Chalotais. Death of the Dauphin. Choiseul's Projects for the Revival of France. Improvements in the Army and the Marine. Acquisition of Corsica. Paoli. Affairs of Poland. Catharine and Frederick II. *Confederation of Bar.* Massacres in the Ukraine. The Poles and J. J. Rousseau. Dumouriez in Poland. War between Russia and Turkey. Projects of Prussia and Austria for the Partition of Poland. Marriage of the New Dauphin to *Marie Antoinette*. Terrai, Comptroller-General. System of Bankruptcy. Fall of Choiseul. Reign of **MADAME DU BARRI.** **TRIUMVIRATE OF MAUPEOU, TERRAI, AND D'AIGUILLON.** **DESTRUCTION OF THE PARLIAMENTS.** Russia accedes to the Plans of Frederick II. **PARTITION OF POLAND.** The Minister, D'Aiguillon, abandons Poland. England an Accomplice. *Pact of Famine.* The King a Monopolizer. Death of Louis XV.

1763-1774.

It remains for us to survey the last political vicissitudes of the ancient French régime, which was hastening with constantly accelerated speed to its final overthrow. The end of the reign of Louis XV. shows nought but ruins accumulating, and paving the way for the universal ruin: the props and buttresses were crumbling; and the body of the edifice would not be long in giving way.

The first of these ruins was that of the Company of Jesus, a prop, doubtless, not of the State, but, at least, of the Roman Church. The progress of the philosophic doctrines contributed only indirectly to this great event, which was not, as has been pretended, planned long in advance, but which proceeded from incidental, remote, and unforeseen causes.

It is unnecessary to revert here to the spirit of the institution and the part of its members, who have been seen in this history continually at work for the last two centuries: their political and religious action is sufficiently known; but we have not hitherto

had occasion to point out their commercial action, so extended and encroaching, and which was destined to become so fatal to them. The first monks had been clearers of the forest, and tillers of the soil, in behalf of civilization. The Jesuits became traders and monopolizers, not in behalf of industrial and commercial progress, which did not need them, but in behalf of their wealth and their corporative power. These defenders of the dogmas of the past, these pretended revivers of the Middle Ages, who bore so little resemblance to the Middle Ages, adapted themselves but too well to the material tendencies of the modern world. They traded little in France, where they were held in check by the vigilance of the magistracy, but much in the French colonies: they exercised truly detestable monopolies at Rome, where they caused all the suits commenced against them to be suspended by the authorities; and paid their debts whenever it suited them. At Goa, in Spanish America, and in Brazil, they ruined secular commerce, not only by a competition which arrogated to itself all rights and rejected all burdens, but by smuggling, which was easy to those who had no search to fear from custom-house officers. They were thus detrimental at once to governments and to private individuals; and a smothered irritation against them lurked in the depths of many hearts.

Not content with ruling Spanish and Portuguese America, they had extended their missions beyond the limits of European colonization; and what they had been unable to do in Canada, among the indomitable tribes of the *red-skins*, they had accomplished in Paraguay among feeble and docile races. They had converted, organized, and civilized, in their way, the savages of these countries; and had there a great Jesuit kingdom of fifty parishes, governed despotically by as many fathers of the mission, themselves under the jurisdiction of the provincial father, the true King of Paraguay, — a strange government, founded on a theocratic communism, which they seemed to have copied from the ancient empire of Peru under the Incas. By introducing Christianity among these tribes, attaching them to the soil, and increasing their population through agriculture, they had placed them in a condition incomparably better than the wretched and almost animal life which they had formerly led in the forests, or that which other Indians had found under the destructive tyranny of the Spanish conquerors. If morality had reason elsewhere to blame the commercial operations of the Company of Jesus, here, therefore, humanity had only to applaud its success, although it

is necessary to distrust certain exaggerations, and to beware of presenting as a model community an infant people destined by its education to an eternal childhood,—a community in which human personality was yet to be born, in which property had no existence, and in which the family scarcely existed; the paternal power being wholly in the hands of the monk-kings, together with the soil, and the traffic in its productions.¹

Paraguay, meanwhile, belonged nominally to the crown of Spain. In 1750, a bargain was made between Spain and Portugal for an exchange of territory. Spain ceded Paraguay for the colony of Sacramento (on the eastern bank of the La Plata), but ceded the land without the men, and stipulated that the inhabitants should be transferred to Spanish territory. The Indians, encouraged by the Jesuits, refused to permit themselves to be carried away from their country like herds of cattle; fought a battle with the Spanish troops; then, pursued and barbarously hunted down, dispersed among the forests and the pampas (1758-1756). The exchange, however, in consequence of new complications, was not realized; but both governments continued to bear ill will to the Jesuits, although the society had afterwards repudiated a resistance certainly very legitimate.

The cabinets of Madrid and Lisbon had, as we have just shown, better-founded grievances. The storm first broke out in Portugal. This was the country of all Europe in which the Jesuits exercised the most absolute dominion; and their introduction into this kingdom, so brilliant in the sixteenth century, and since so fallen, had corresponded with the beginning of its decline. They had stifled the bold and active genius of the country of Gama and Albuquerque: such, at least, was the conviction, which, long matured in the depths of a powerful and gloomy mind, directed the blow which crushed them. The minister who ruled Portugal under the name of the weak Joseph I., the Marquis de Pombal, did not belong to that Voltarian school which had made its way

¹ A bull of Benedict XIV., of December 25, 1741, proves that the Jesuits, paternal as they were in Paraguay, were not, however, everywhere irreproachable in their conduct towards the Indians. This bull forbids their "reducing the said Indians to servitude, selling them, buying them, exchanging them, . . . separating them from their wives and children, despoiling them of their goods and effects," etc. — See the Decree of the Parliament of Paris against the Jesuits, August, 1761; ap. *Anciennes Loix françaises*, t. XXII. p. 357. They had attempted the slave-trade. "In Africa, they had endeavored to establish trading-stations for the purpose of furnishing slaves for the pearl-fishery, which they carried on in India." — Desalles, *Histoire des Antilles*, t. V. p. 435. This writer gives very interesting details concerning the proceedings of the Jesuits in the West Indies.

at this epoch into the councils of most of the governments: a reformer also, but a reformer in a purely national sense, he was so little of a philosopher, that he took the Inquisition as a counterpoise to the Jesuits, and more than once made use of *autos-da-fé* as means of popularity.¹ A double hatred filled his soul. The grandees fettered his policy and wounded his pride as a plebeian by their arrogance: he hated them as Richelieu had hated them, and he hated the Jesuits as Philippe the Fair had hated the Templars. His indignation against the society broke forth, at the beginning of 1758, in manifestoes, in which he denounced the Jesuits to the Pope, and accused them of having derogated from the principles of their founders by illicit traffic, and by plots against the State. He interdicted to them commerce, then preaching and confession; meanwhile employing against them the bishops and the Dominicans, who composed the tribunal of the Inquisition. They had oppressed every one, and every one became hostile to them. Pope Benedict XIV. died before giving a definitive answer to the Portuguese government (May, 1758).

During the interval, a domestic tragedy, which involved the appalling ruin of the first two families of Portugal, precipitated the destruction of the Jesuits in this kingdom by its reaction, and rendered the circumstances thereof more painful. King Joseph I. carried dishonor into the most illustrious houses by that frenzied licentiousness which he had inherited from his father, but which the latter had at least confined within the walls of a convent transformed into a harem. During the night of September 3, 1758, the King, while on his way secretly to visit the Marchioness de Tavora, a new victim of his seduction, received two bullets in his arm. Three months passed by, and the inquiries concerning this attempted regicide were deemed fruitless and abandoned; when suddenly all the Tavoras were arrested, together with the D'Aveiros, who had shared the outrages of the King with the Tavoras, and who had sought to share their vengeance. January 13, 1759, seven members or relatives of these two houses, including the mother-in-law of the King's mistress, condemned by an extraordinary commission of which Pombal was a member, perished amid frightful tortures. Surveillance, meanwhile, was maintained over the houses of all the Jesuits, three of whom had been

¹ The form of procedure of the Portuguese Inquisition had been modified in 1728 by the introduction of counsel and the communication of the heads of the indictment and the names of the witnesses to the accused, and was modified still farther by Pombal in 1758; but the penalty had not changed.

declared guilty, by the judges of the D'Aveiros and the Tavoras, of having authorized, as confessors or casuists, the project of the regicide. A brief was solicited of the new Pope, Clement XIII. (Rezzonico), authorizing their degradation and punishment. Clement XIII. delayed the sending of the brief; upon which the minister caused all the Portuguese Jesuits, numbering more than six hundred, to be seized, transported to the Roman States, and landed on the shore of Civita-Vecchia (September, 1759). The Pope, enraged, ordered Pombal's manifesto to be publicly burnt. The minister replied by confiscating the property of the society, and breaking off all diplomatic relations with Rome. It is very characteristic, that, after such acts of violence, Pombal, nevertheless, dared not set at nought the ecclesiastical privileges. Instead of condemning the principal one of the Jesuits inculpated, Malagrida, as guilty of high treason, he caused him to be declared a heretic by the Inquisition, and delivered over as such to the secular arm. Malagrida mounted the pyre of an auto-da-fé! (September 10, 1761.) His two companions in misfortune were left to die in prison.

The extraordinary acts of Pombal did not obtain that approbation abroad which seemed promised by the prevailing antipathy of public opinion to the Jesuits. In this period of the eighteenth century, the spirit of justice and humanity was more powerful than any party-spirit. The utility of the end did not appear to justify the barbarity and hypocrisy of the means. The philosophers saw in it only a civil war between despotism and the Inquisition on the one hand, and the Jesuits on the other. Voltaire openly declared, that, in the trial of Malagrida, "the excess of absurdity was joined to the excess of horror." The most curious feature was, that the English, those savage enemies of Papistry, manifested a lively discontent at the expulsion of the great Papist society, with which they carried on a lucrative contraband trade. Perhaps their policy also believed itself interested in the maintenance of a body which might indeed be a power to the Pope, but which caused the weakening of Catholic nations.

The example set by Pombal, nevertheless, had the same results as if the policy of this minister had been approved. Men disliked Pombal; but they none the less perceived with joy that it was easier to overthrow the Jesuits than they had imagined. So small and so superstitious a State having ventured on it, why should not France do the same? What none had thought the day before, every one thought now. The attack came from two directions at once,—the favorite and the parliament. Jansenism and the

court corruption contracted a strange offensive alliance. We have already related how Madame de Pompadour, when she effected the adroit evolution which transformed her from the mistress into the friend and counsellor of the King, attempted to set herself right with the Church and to make friends with the Jesuits; and how the latter, who had united with the party of the Dauphin, rejected the advances of the favorite, who was forced to accept war (1752-1757). It was therefore through austerity that the society, so much blamed for its accommodating maxims, had this time endangered its existence.¹

An honorable deed had involved the Jesuits in peril; a dishonorable one plunged them into it still deeper. Father La Valette, the superior-general of the Jesuits in the Windward Islands, had converted the house of his order, at St. Pierre in Martinique, into an extensive banking and trading establishment, in correspondence with the most important places of Europe; and monopolized all the commercial business of the French Lesser Antilles. The government, at the solicitation of the colonists, prohibited him, as well as his fellows, from occupying himself with any thing but the ecclesiastical ministry. Supported by his superiors, he paid no attention to the prohibition. In 1755, Father La Valette having drawn numerous letters of exchange upon his principal correspondents, Lionci and Gouffre, the heads of a commercial house of Marseilles, the merchandise which he sent to France to cover these letters was piratically seized by the English.² Lionci and Gouffre had recourse, for their reimbursement, to Father de Saci, the attorney-general of the missions of France, who at first furnished them some funds, but who did not think himself authorized to take the steps necessary to meet all their demands without referring to his superiors. The generalship of the company was then vacant; an inevitable delay in filling it occurred: the paper, meanwhile, was protested, and the Lioncis suspended payment (February, 1756). The new general, Ricci, who had at first determined

¹ Later, however, the leaders of the society at Paris endeavored to retrace their steps, and made secret advances to Madame de Pompadour; but it was too late. — *Mém. de madame du Hausset*, Barrière edit. p. 103.

² Another resource also failed La Valette: he had announced his intention of sending to France the relics of holy personages of his order who had formerly suffered martyrdom at the hands of the savages. The pretended relics were ingots of gold. The cases arrived at the Jesuit convent at Bordeaux, where they were found to contain, instead of ingots and relics, nothing but the bones of animals. They had been opened by the captain of the ship. The Jesuits could not enter a complaint, the bill of lading having specified nothing but bones. — Desalles, *Hist. des Antilles*, t. V. p. 432. This book gives the best account extant of the affair of La Valette.

to pay the claims and continue the commerce, seeing that it was too late to arrest the scandal, and that analogous demands were about to appear from different places, changed his mind, and ordered the redemption to cease, and La Valette to be repudiated. The assignee of the bankrupt Lionci having brought an action before the consul-judges of Marseilles against Fathers La Valette and De Saci, La Valette suffered default. De Saci refused to be responsible for the operations of his subordinate. La Valette was sentenced besides to pay one million five hundred thousand francs to the assignees of Lionci: the decision with respect to Saci was postponed (November, 1759).

Both judges and creditors were agreed in allowing the Jesuits full time for reflection; but the general, Ricci, was used to the customs of Rome, where the Jesuits were above the laws, and where public opinion had no force. He kept silence. La Valette became bankrupt for more than three millions. The Lioncis, having no further reason for conciliation, brought an action against the whole body of Jesuits in France, as jointly responsible. The consuls decided in conformity with the demands of the plaintiffs (May 29, 1760).

The reaction of this affair was speedily felt at a distance. The counting-house of the Jesuits at Genoa was closed by the Genoese government, and Venice forbade the Venetian Jesuits thenceforth to receive novices. In France, the lieutenant-general of police, Ségur, interdicted to them the sale of drugs; and the immense pharmacy which they had at Lyons was closed.

They had suffered default, and taken exception to the sentence of the consuls. A last chance remained to them. The trial of the regular clergy was assigned as a privilege to the Great Council; an exceptional tribunal, which was friendly to the Church, and which would have doubtless endeavored to enlighten them concerning their true interests, and to induce them to settle the matter amicably. A Father Frey, a Jesuit of Paris, who passed for an acute politician, persuaded them not to use this privilege, but to carry the case to the Great Chamber of the Parliament of Paris. Their triumph, certain in any case according to him, would be only more brilliant before such a tribunal. The spirit of madness had seized upon this body, so renowned for its worldly prudence. It put into the hands of its greatest enemies a cause which the best disposed judges could have decided in its favor only by being false to all justice!

The leaders of the society at Paris doubtless relied at this mo-

ment on the success of a cabal formed at court to overthrow Choiseul, and to give the power to the coterie of the Dauphin. This prince, whose private virtues seemed a reaction and protest against his father's vices, personally deserved all esteem;¹ but though he was far from being deficient in instruction, and even in mind, his surroundings were not good, and his narrow devotion and prejudices led him to serve by petty means a plot unworthy of his character. The Duke de La Vauguyon, the governor of the children of France, a malignant and intriguing fanatic, whose crafty ambition Choiseul had offended, persuaded the Dauphin to convey to the King a memorial written by a Jesuit under the name of a parliamentary counsellor. This was a denunciation of Choiseul, who was accused of having conspired with the parliaments to force the King to destroy the Society of Jesus, the whole spiced with the details best calculated to pique the self-love of Louis XV. The intrigue failed. The minister came off victorious from an explanation with the King, — an explanation followed by an extremely warm scene with the Dauphin. It was on this occasion that Choiseul let fall the speech that was destined to close the way to his return to power after the death of Louis XV.: "Monsieur, I may have the misfortune to be your subject; but I will never be your servant"² (June, 1760).

The most piquant feature in this affair was, that Choiseul, although attached to the interests of Madame de Pompadour, had troubled himself very little about the Jesuits, and that he took in great part from their own memorial the idea of the plan which he afterwards pursued against them, without, however, by any means employing in it the implacableness of which they had accused him; for he was not at all vindictive. The magistracy used far greater ardor.

The suit of Marseilles, meanwhile, had reached the parliament of Paris. The general had this time been indicted in person by the assignee of the bankrupt Lionci. The Jesuits denied the joint responsibility imputed to them by their adversaries, and maintained that each of their houses or colleges was administered separately with respect to temporal matters. It was for their constitutions

¹ Having had the misfortune to wound one of his squires mortally while hunting, he abandoned this exercise, his favorite amusement, to the detriment of his health, and never again touched a fire-arm.

² *Mém. de Choiseul*, t. I. pp. 1-56. These are not connected memoirs, but a collection of various documents written by Choiseul, some of which are very interesting. — *Mém. de Besenval*, t. II.

to decide the point of fact. The parliament ordered the constitutions to be brought to its bar (April 17, 1761). May 8, with full knowledge of the case, it confirmed the sentence of the consuls-judges according to the conclusions of the attorney-general, Le Pelletier de Saint-Fargeau.¹

This was only the first blow. The constitutions of the society once drawn by force from the obscurity of its archives, the parliament of Paris did not relax its hold on them; and almost all the provincial parliaments, after its example, appointed commissions thoroughly to examine every thing concerning Ignatius's institution. The general, Ricci, at last comprehended the state of affairs. At the news of the prescribed examination, he wrote to Choiseul a most curious letter (May 13, 1761), in which he let fall the confession that several points of the constitutions of the society, as they were drawn up by its founder, were incompatible with the political principles of *certain States*; but represented, that, inasmuch as the society abandoned the points in question wherever the sovereigns exacted it, the theory of its laws should not be condemned without examining the policy by which they were explained or modified.² Pope Clement XIII. addressed to the King the most earnest entreaties for the safety of the society (June 9, 1761). Louis replied favorably to the Holy Father, and promised to check the ardor of his parliament, and to reserve to himself the right of deciding on the constitutions of the Jesuits. Choiseul himself had not yet resolved on his course, and had told the King, on learning of the decree of the parliament concerning the examination of the constitutions, that he could still choose between the destruction or the maintenance of the Jesuits; but that, if he did not wish to destroy them, he should stop the parliament at the first step. The King was disposed to do so; but the Chancellor de Lamoignon entreated him to temporize.³ Louis caused the constitutions to be transmitted to him, and appointed commissioners from his council to report to him thereon; but he did not forbid the parliament, on its side, to continue its investigation.

The parliament of Paris proceeded. July 8, a clerical counselor, the Abbé Terrai, a personage for whom a deplorable celebrity was in store, presented to the *assembled chambers* a report "on

¹ The father of the one, who, after playing a somewhat important part in the National Convention, was sacrificed by a royalist dagger to the manes of Louis XVI.

² Flasseau, *Histoire de la Diplomatie française*, t. VI. p. 489.

³ *Mém. de Besenval*, t. II. p. 56, according to the testimony of Choiseul.

the moral and practical doctrine of the so-called priests and scholars of the Society of Jesus." A new commission was deputed by the parliament to substantiate the startling assertions of the report. The King attempted to gain time. August 4, he sent to the parliament a declaration suspending for a year all decision upon whatever concerned the society. The parliament registered it, but, nevertheless, published two scathing decrees which it had prepared (August 6). The first condemned to the flames a great number of books composed by the Jesuits during the last two centuries, as teaching a *murderous* and *abominable* doctrine against the safety of the lives of citizens, and even of sovereigns; temporarily prohibited all subjects of the King from entering the society, or becoming affiliated thereto; interdicted all functions of instruction to the priests, scholars, etc., of the said society, from the first of the ensuing April, with the reservation of the right of those, who might claim to be authorized by letters-patent verified by the parliament, to present these letters;¹ declared all students who continued to attend the Jesuit schools after the expiration of the time fixed, in whatever place it might be, ineligible to any degrees or public functions; and requested of the universities, and the judicial and municipal authorities, memorials on the means of providing for the education of the youth instructed by the Jesuits. The second decree received the appeal from the ecclesiastical court, as having exceeded its jurisdiction, lodged by the attorney-general against all the bulls and briefs of the popes that had founded or confirmed the society, and against "the said constitutions," especially with respect to the despotic power attributed to the general, — a power independent of all temporal or even spiritual authority, since the papacy was bound to the society to such a degree, that, if the Holy See should interfere by any act of revocation or reformation, the society was empowered to restore every thing to its former condition, on its own authority, and without the authorization of the Holy See!

August 29, letters-patent of the King suspended for a year the execution of the decrees of August 6. The parliament registered them, with the provision that the suspension should not take place till April 1, and that no vows or affiliations should be received in the interval; in other words, it very nearly maintained its decrees.

A first endeavor to compromise was attempted meanwhile by the

¹ More than half the Jesuit colleges (eighty out of one hundred and forty-eight) had been established without legal authority.

court of France. The King sent to the Holy Father the plan of a declaration to be signed by the superiors of the houses of the society, and which contained, among other articles, an assent to the Gallican liberties. The only concession which could be obtained from the Pope and the General was to close their eyes to the assent that might be given by the French Jesuits, but without permitting them to do so in writing, in order to reserve the right, in better times, of annulling the declaration as *sur-reptitious*.¹

The expedient was farcical. The King was still unwilling to break off the negotiation. The commissioners of the council consulted the archbishops and bishops present at Paris concerning the utility that could be derived from the Jesuits, and the means of remedying the despotism of their leader. The spirit of the higher clergy had greatly changed through the long Molinistic dominion: of fifty-one prelates, a single one declared himself in favor of the abolition of the Jesuits; five, in favor of maintaining them only as colleges, and not as an institution; and all the rest entreated the King to preserve them, "as religion itself," but admitted the necessity of grave modifications in their institution. It was decided to propose to the general to delegate his full powers for France to five provincial vicars, who were to take an oath before the chancellor of obedience to the laws of the kingdom, to engage to cause the Four Articles of 1682 to be taught, to admit no foreign Jesuit into France without the King's permission, and to submit to the inspection of their colleges by the parliament (January, 1762). An edict drawn up on these bases, March 11, 1762, was sent to the parliament of Paris, as if it were certain that this ultimatum would be accepted at Rome.²

The answer ascribed to General Ricci is well known, *Sint ut sunt, aut non sint!* (Let them be as they are, or not at all!*) The saying has been disputed: the refusal is certain. Acceptance was impossible. For a cosmopolitan theocracy to shut itself up in a State and a national Church, and to submit to the yoke of civil laws, was suicide. It was better to die fighting than to die repudiating itself. The Pope sought to arouse the fanaticism that still existed in France. Not daring to have recourse to

¹ Flassan, t. VI. p. 494

² Flassan, t. VI. p. 498; *Mercurie historique*, t. CLI. p. 640, t. CLII. p. 382.

* This saying is accepted as authentic by the diplomatic historians, Flassan and Saint-Priest: the *Mercury* of the Hague ascribes it, not to Ricci, but to Clement XIII. himself.

the obsolete thunders of the Middle Ages, he strove at least to stir up the ecclesiastical order in behalf of the Jesuits, and to put himself in direct communication, contrary to the laws of the kingdom, with 'the periodical assembly of the clergy, in session at Paris in the spring of 1762. The Cardinal de La Roche-Aimon, the president of the assembly, refused to receive the papal brief, and transmitted it to the King, who ordered it to be sent back to the Holy Father.

Louis XV. had decided, or rather resigned himself, with his usual indifference.¹ Choiseul, his course once resolved upon, had seconded Madame de Pompadour with his accustomed vivacity. The struggle had been warm at court. The Queen, the Dauphin, and their friends, had made desperate efforts to save the society. Old habits of bigoted friendliness to the Jesuits contended strangely in the King with the fear of the *knife of Châtel*, revived by the *regicide* of Portugal. Choiseul won him by another fear,—that of the parliaments and the people, whom he represented to him as so much excited against the society, as to be on the point of inciting a new Fronde if the Jesuits were maintained. In fact, it was too late to draw back. No statesman could have advised him to do so. The true policy, and the only one worthy of him, would have been to strike the blow from the throne, and to anticipate the decrees of the parliaments by a royal declaration. Louis XV. preferred leaving all the responsibility and honor to the courts of justice.

The whole winter of 1761-1762 had been occupied with those celebrated reports to the different parliaments, in which the magistracy's long-standing resentment against the great congregation was poured forth with an ardent, inexhaustible, and, at times, eloquent passion. The parliamentary names of Chauvelin (the son of the minister), Terrai, Laverdi, Castillon, and, above all, Montclar and La Chalotais, equalled for an instant in popularity the great philosophic names of the age. A generation that did not believe in Christianity sided with the official accusers of the society in the old controversies which denied that the Jesuits were orthodox Christians. To one of these men, at least, popularity remained glory: the character of La Chalotais worthily sustained the renown procured for him by his scathing polemic against the society, and his remarkable *Essay on Na-*

¹ He gave his assent by a jest: "I should not be sorry to see how Father Desmaretz would look as an abbé (in bands instead of a long robe)." Desmaretz was the King's confessor. — *Mém. de Besenval*, t. II. p. 58.

tional Education. It was as a patriot and a statesman that he had condemned the Jesuits.¹

The parliament of Rouen had not waited for the King's permission to strike. As early as February 15, it had annulled, and condemned to the flames, the statutes of the society, and ordered all the Jesuits to vacate their houses and colleges situated within its jurisdiction; then had imposed on them, as a condition of their individual eligibility to any functions whatsoever, an oath of assent to the Articles of 1682, and of rupture with the society and the general. All the colleges within the jurisdiction of the parliament of Paris were vacated April 1, in conformity with the decrees of August 6, 1761, and given up to new professors, Oratorians and others. Decrees analogous to those of Rouen followed each other at Bordeaux, Rennes, Metz, Pau, Perpignan, Toulouse, and Aix. August 6, the parliament of Paris defaulted the general of the *so-called Society of Jesus* in the appeal from the ecclesiastical court, as having exceeded its jurisdiction, received a year before; and declared "the said institution inadmissible, by its nature, in any established State, as contrary to natural law, and tending to introduce, into the Church and the States, not an order which aspires truly and solely to evangelical perfection, but rather a political body, whose essence consists in a continual activity, for the purpose of attaining, by every kind of means, first to absolute independence, and successively to the usurpation of all authority; especially inasmuch as, in order to form an immense body diffused throughout all States without really forming a part of them, . . . the said society has constituted itself monarchical: . . . so that as many members as it procures among the different nations, so many subjects, who take an oath of the most absolute and unbounded fidelity to a foreign monarch, are lost by the sovereigns, . . . a body, which, by its very existence amidst any State into which it is introduced, evidently tends to effect the dissolution of all administration, and to destroy the close relation which forms the bond between all the parts of the body politic."²

¹ "I design to claim for the nation an education which depends only on the State, because a nation has an inalienable and imprescriptible right to instruct its members, and because, in fine, the children of the State should be reared by the State." — *Rapport du procureur-général Caradeuc de La Chalotais au parlement de Bretagne.* It is important to remark that the question is put here, not between monopoly and liberty, according to the formula which is so much abused in our days, but between the country and foreign theocracy. The report of Montclar, says M. Villemain, is a masterpiece of method and perspicuity.

² *Anciennes Loix françaises*, t. XXII. p. 328.

The parliament might have dispensed with prefacing these serious and solid conclusions by premises which were refuted by their own exaggeration, — an enormous mass of quotations combined for the purpose of imputing to the Society of the Jesuits the systematic justification of every vice and crime. Whatever may be said concerning the morality of the Jesuits,¹ their true crime was that of being a State within a State, a foreign body whose parasitical presence is, as the parliament well said, a principle of *dissolution*, a morbid principle in the national body.

The parliament concluded by declaring that the vows of the Jesuits were null and void, and that the society had forfeited its first authorization and its reestablishment (under Henri IV., to the conditions of which, moreover, it had never conformed), and was irrevocably excluded from the kingdom. It forbade all persons ever to propose or solicit the recall of the society, under penalty of criminal prosecution. It enjoined on all members of the society to vacate their houses within a week, without power to assemble anew; and imposed on those among them who aspired to any functions whatever the same oath that had been dictated by the parliament of Rouen.

The decree was promulgated in the name of the King. Another decree of the same date, confirmed and modified a few months after by a regulation of the council, provided for the administration of the colleges, for pensions for the support of the ex-Jesuits, and for the payment of the creditors, who, it may be said in passing, were never fully satisfied.

The effect on public opinion was immense: men thought themselves dreaming on seeing this clay-footed colossus fall so easily! The few remaining Jansenists, and the old bourgeoisie in general, partly Gallican and partly Voltarian, applauded with delight. The philosophers and the politicians saw in the downfall of the Jesuits a first blow dealt to the edifice of the past, and the prelude of the speedy ruin of all the monks; of all, at least, who led an active life, and were under the jurisdiction of foreign leaders.²

¹ See Martin's *Histoire de France*, t. VIII. pp. 313-320, and t. XI. pp. 73-78.

² See D'Alembert's work, *De la Destruction des Jésuites*, 1765 (published anonymously), and the *Correspondance de Voltaire*, passim. "The monastic spirit," said Chalotais to the parliament of Brittany, "is the scourge of States. Of all who are animated by this spirit, the Jesuits are the most injurious, because they are the most powerful: it is therefore with them that we must begin in order to shake off the yoke of this pernicious class."

After the suppression of the Jesuits, the government turned its attention to remedying some of the abuses of monasticism. An edict of March, 1768, forbade the entrance

The joy, however, was not unanimous: there was opposition, bitter complaint, and smothered agitation, among the numerous affiliated members or penitents of the Jesuits, and among minds who were dismayed at the progress of infidelity, and who regarded the Jesuits as the *grenadiers of the army of faith*. Pamphlets rained everywhere. It was known that the Pope had annulled the decree of the parliaments in secret consistory; but he dared not give publicity to his allocution. A few bishops issued hostile mandates; and, which was more serious, a few parliaments hesitated to follow their colleagues, and had not yet caused the colleges within their jurisdiction to be vacated: the parliaments of Metz, Grenoble, and Dijon, stood on the reserve; that of Aix had adopted the suppression by a majority of one; and the parliaments of Besançon and Douai were wholly in favor of the society. Some decrees of the council concerning questions of execution were stamped with a dilatoriness which disquieted the parliament of Paris and its allies of the provinces. The parliament of Paris, seconded by the ministry, spared nothing to urge the King to an irrevocable act. The parliament ordered a virulent pastoral letter of instructions from the Archbishop of Paris, who had compared the Society of Jesus to the *Holy City of Jerusalem*,¹ to be burned. The King banished the archbishop forty leagues from Paris (January, 1764). February 22, the parliament prescribed that all Jesuits, without distinction, should take an oath, within a week, no longer to live under the dominion of their institution, to abjure the condemned maxims, and to hold no correspondence with their former leaders. A few only obeyed. June 1, the parliament set aside two briefs of the Pope.

The parliament prevailed. The death of Madame de Pompadour (March 15, 1764) did not shake Choiseul's power, and was of no advantage to the Jesuits. A royal declaration of November, 1764, wholly abolished the society in France, permitting its former mem-

into the monastic profession of men under twenty-one, and women under eighteen. This was called a remedy: it may be judged what was the evil! The same edict tended to lessen the number of convents by uniting them: the most had but a small number of monks. Part of the monks themselves went beyond the secular authority. There was a kind of schism among the Benedictines: many of them demanded from the civil power the abolition of what was most contrary to the spirit of the age in their order; but the latter recoiled from the task.

¹ Among the numerous apologies of the Jesuits, condemned to the flames by the parliament, is remarked a certain *Appel à la Raison*, by Caveirac, the apologist of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. Another more celebrated *Apology* was that of the young Jesuit Cerutti, a man of an ardent and impassioned spirit, who became a revolutionist in 1789.

bers to live as private individuals in the kingdom, under the spiritual authority of the regular clergy, and in conformity with the laws. The parliament aggravated their position by a decree which ordered them to reside in their native dioceses, and to present themselves every six months before the deputy attorney-generals in the bailiwicks and seneschalships, and forbade them to approach within ten leagues of Paris.¹

After Portugal, France had attacked the society; after France, it was the turn of Spain. Here the purely national motives which had impelled the Portuguese government were combined with the philosophic inspiration of the spirit of the age. The King, however, was personally an utter stranger to this inspiration. Carlos III., the only estimable and in any degree sensible monarch that the Bourbons had given to Spain, while replacing on the throne the sluggish hypochondria of his predecessors by a salutary activity, supported by a feeling of duty, had retained of his family traditions a rigorous and minute devotion; but his devotion was not servile towards Rome, and his ministers had philosophy in his stead. The D'Arandas, the Campomanes, the Rodas, and the Moniños (afterwards better known under the name of Florida-Blanca) were more or less completely absorbed in the movement of French ideas. They did not need to suggest to the King prejudices against the Jesuits which had existed in his mind from the time that he reigned at Naples. The remembrance of the Paraguay affair, prior to his accession to the throne of Spain, had been revived by the complaints of the viceroys of Spanish America concerning the commercial monopolies of the Jesuits. Carlos III., however, hesitated long before resolving upon a violent course. He began to be irritated, when, in 1765, he thought that he discerned the hand of the Jesuits, at the same time with that of the English, in the serious disturbances which broke out among the Hispano-American population on account of a new system of taxation. Spain soon experienced the reaction of these movements. One of the ministers of Carlos III., the Italian Squillace, had rendered himself unpopular at once as a foreigner, an innovator, and a despot, among a proud nation, ruled by the spirit of routine, and little disposed to accept progress through despotism. Squillace having taken a fancy to prohibit the broad slouched hats and large cloaks (*chambergos* and *capas*), those two essential articles of the national costume, Madrid rose infuriatedly. The King's guard was routed, the King was obliged to make terms with the mob,

¹ *Anciennes Loix franpaises*, t. XXII. p. 424.

and the minister was forced to quit Spain (March 23-27, 1766).

The Spanish character might, rigorously, have sufficed naturally to explain the sedition: nevertheless, Carlos III., deeply incensed, attributed his affront to the Society of Jesus. The King of Spain was not deluded, as has been imagined, by the secret manoeuvres of Choiseul: it was the result of a serious investigation, pursued secretly by the command of Carlos, that persuaded this prince of the culpability of the Jesuits. Their plan, as Carlos affirmed to the ambassador from France, was to cause the rioters to impose on him far different conditions from the dismissal of a minister, and to put him in tutelage in the hands of a party that wished to deprive Spain of the advantage of the trifling progress which she had begun to make.¹ The Jesuits aimed at indemnifying themselves in Spain for their disasters in France and Portugal.²

It is certain that Carlos III., far from being the instrument of the cabinet of Versailles, did not apprise Louis XV. and Choiseul of his intentions until the very moment when he was about to act, after a year of mysterious preparation. April 2, 1767, a royal Pragmatic Sanction not only abolished the Society of Jesus, but expelled the Jesuits from the entire monarchy of Spain, accompanied with a prohibition to all Spaniards to discuss the measure adopted by the King, even to approve it, under penalty of high treason; "because it does not belong to private individuals," said the Pragmatic Sanction, "to judge and interpret the wishes of the sovereign." The violence of the execution responded to this strange language. On the same day, at the same hour, throughout the whole extent of the Spanish possessions, from one end of the world to the other, the Jesuits were arrested and embarked on ships or transported towards the seaports.³ The vessels that bore them set sail for the Roman State. Carlos III. sent

¹ Two concordats, issued in 1737 and 1753, had, in some degree, attacked the ultramontane supremacy; and a decree of 1762, which was abrogated, then reëstablished, had greatly modified and mitigated the Inquisition. — See W. Coxe, *L'Espagne sous les Bourbons*, t. V. p. 168, and in Saint-Priest, *De la Suppression de la Société de Jésus*, the analysis of the despatches from the French ambassador to M. de Choiseul.

² *Les Jésuites jugés par les rois, les évêques, et le pape*, published by L. Viardot, pp. 18-25; 1857, in 12mo. This is the translation of whatever concerns the Jesuits in the Spanish History of Carlos III., by Don Ant. Ferrer del Rio, a history written from the Correspondence of Carlos III., and other documents from the archives of Simancas. The Spanish author, a fervent Catholic, moreover, deduces from the facts the culpability of the Jesuits.

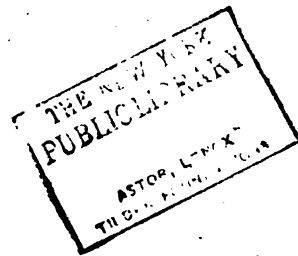
³ No exceptions were made, except for those of very advanced age and the sick. — *Instruction du comte d'Aranda*, *ibid.* p. 34.

back the Jesuits to the Pope as being his subjects in reality, and not those of the crown of Spain.

At the instigation of the general himself, Ricci, who reigned at Rome under the name of the aged Clement XIII., the court of Rome replied to the notification of Carlos III. that it would not receive the exiles, although Carlos promised to insure their support. Spain paid no attention to it. When the first Spanish ships, laden with Jesuits, arrived at Civita-Vecchia, they were received with a cannonade. Anger and despair had driven Ricci to madness! The Spaniards, unwilling to employ force against the Pope, put out again to sea, and presented themselves successively before Leghorn, Genoa, and the Corsican ports, occupied by the French: they were refused a landing everywhere, until finally Choiseul, by the entreaty of Carlos III., consented to grant an asylum in Corsica to the Spanish exiles. These unhappy victims of the barbarous obstinacy of their own leader, even more than of Spanish harshness, crowded in the transports, had been tossed about for several months in the Mediterranean; and it is affirmed that many among them had succumbed to the fatigues and sufferings of this mournful voyage. The court of Rome at last relaxed its cruel resolution, and received at least those of the Jesuits who were brought from the East and America.

Their brethren of France had just received a new blow. They had been very insubordinate to the commands of the parliaments, and had endeavored to take advantage of the renewed strife between the parliaments and the court to raise up embarrassments and perils in the way of their conquerors. At the news of the Spanish Pragmatic Sanction, the parliament of Paris declared the Jesuits public enemies, enjoined on them all to quit the kingdom within a fortnight, and entreated the King to concert with the Catholic princes to obtain from the Pope the total extinction of the society (May 9, 1767).¹ All the measures aimed at the existence of the society were sanctioned by public opinion; but the acts of personal violence exceeded the popular sentiment. If the Jansenists were implacable towards their hereditary persecutors, the philosophers, more humane, more Christian, so to speak, in feeling, than the orthodox Christians, did not refuse their pity, and even perhaps, at times, their aid, to so many outlaws, the greater part of whom had been only the passive instruments of the policy of their order. The philosophers began, moreover, to fear that the harsh genius of Jansenism, revived by the fall of the rival fac-

¹ *Mercure historique*, t. CLXII. p. 635.





A Paris, chez M. Blanchard & Desenne, Rue du Croissant N° 5

Ant. d'Alençon

tion, might become more dangerous to liberty and tolerance than Jesuitism itself. Strange to say, it was, in great part, through humanity that Choiseul entered into the views of the parliaments in relation to the total abolition of the society. Far removed from the implacable hatred which the apologists of the Jesuits have imputed to him, he thought, on the contrary, that, the order once abolished by the Holy Father, the exiles would everywhere be suffered to return peaceably, and to live in private, each in his native country.

The King of Spain, so violent towards the Jesuits of his States, nevertheless hesitated when Choiseul on the one hand, and Pomбал on the other, proposed to him to act in concert with them against the entire order. The Pope aided the enemies of the society by an imprudent provocation. The two Bourbon States of Italy, Naples and Parma, had followed the example of Spain, and expelled the Jesuits. Clement XIII. attacked the weaker, and declared the Duke of Parma excommunicated *de facto*, and shorn of his principality, by the Bull, *In cœna Domini*, as a rebellious vassal of the Church (January 20, 1768). Thenceforth it was Carlos III. that urged Louis XV. to act. The King of Spain was slow to decide, but immovable in his resolutions once taken. The seizure of Avignon and Comtat by the French, and the invasion of Benevento by the Neapolitans, avenged the affront to the House of Bourbon. Venice, Modena, and even Bavaria, that centre of German Jesuitism, expelled the Jesuits. Maria Theresa did not decide to do so: nevertheless, the chairs of theology and philosophy were taken from the Jesuits in the Austrian States. January 16, 20, and 24, 1769, the ambassadors from Spain, Naples, then France, presented to the Pope a request for the suppression of the Society of Jesus. The aged pontiff, wounded to the heart, died on the very night preceding the consistory in which the question was to be discussed (February 8, 1769).

The Jesuits made desperate efforts to carry the election of a zealous Pope: they knocked at every door, and implored the protection of the new Emperor, Joseph II., who made a journey to Rome, *incognito*, during the conclave. Joseph showed nothing but indifference and disdain, not only for the society, but for the Sacred College. The Jesuit party lost the election by two votes. The cordelier Ganganelli, of doubtful opinion, was elected by a kind of compromise (May 19, 1769). Very different from his predecessor, the rigid, mediocre, and obstinate Clement XIII., the new Pope, Clement XIV., was intellectual, scholarly, and tolerant,

another Benedict XIV., with less vivacity of spirit and gentler manners: he had committed perhaps but a single fault in his life, — that of suffering himself to be infected with the contagious malady of the cardinals, the *mania for the tiara* (*the papal rabies*). His ambition cost him dear. Scarcely installed, the terrible affair of the Jesuits became a perpetual nightmare to him.¹ He thought only of gaining time, without coming to any decision; and soon found himself between the open threats of Carlos III., whose impatience urged on the indifferent Louis XV. and the smothered menaces of the Jesuits, who alarmed him for his life by sinister rumors. Poison became a fixed idea with him. Choiseul treated these alarms with his habitual levity:² Voltaire had made incredulity the fashion with respect to poison. The King of Spain offered the Pope soldiers for his defence, as if the kind of peril which Clement dreaded could be repulsed with bayonets. In order to obtain a new delay, the Holy Father wrote a letter to Carlos III., in which he explicitly pledged himself to abolish the society, and acknowledged that “its members had deserved their ruin by their restless spirit and their audacious intrigues” (April, 1770). This written promise placed him wholly at the discretion of the Bourbons. He made another concession by annulling the famous Bull, *In cœnâ Domini*, which excommunicated *de facto* all princes, magistrates, etc., who might touch the property of the Church or in any way attack its privileges.

The Jesuits struggled to the end with the energy of despair. Their general sought protection from the *heretical* or *schismatic* powers inimical to the House of Bourbon: he strove to interest Frederick II., the Czarina, and England herself, in the cause of the society. During the interval, Choiseul fell from the ministry, through causes which will be narrated hereafter (December, 1770). The society believed itself saved and avenged. The Jesuits presented a memorial to Louis XV., in which they solicited the arraignment of various diplomatic agents of Choiseul, hoping thus to reach the ex-minister himself. Their illusions were speedily dispelled. The court of Spain was much more eager than Choiseul for their destruction, and Louis XV. dared not endanger the *Family Compact* by refusing the continuance of

¹ He may have given hopes to both parties; but the Spanish historian of Carlos III., Don Ant. Ferrer, asserts that he had not pledged himself, as is affirmed, before his election, to suppress the Jesuits. — *Les Jésuites jugés*, etc.; pp. 60-63.

² “No one would be sure of dying in his bed if every intriguer was an assassin.” — Despatch from Choiseul, cited by Saint-Priest; *Suppression de la Société de Jésus*.

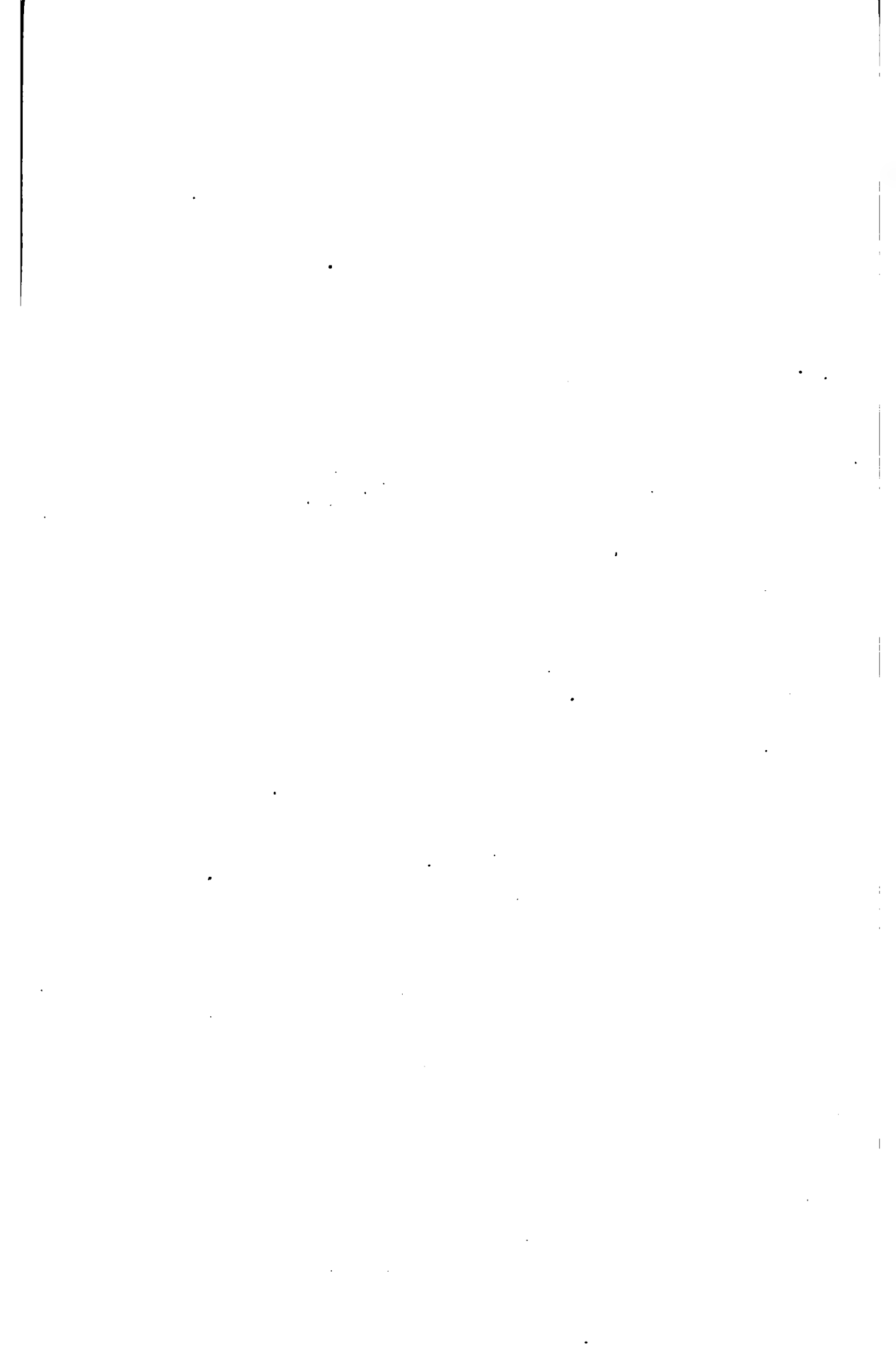


Engraved by John Barber. Arch.

Page 11. The Pont Neuf.

THE PONT NEUF, PARIS, FRANCE, 1861.

THE PONT NEUF, PARIS, FRANCE, 1861.



his aid to Carlos III. The Jesuits strove next to redouble the terrors of Clement XIV. Predictions of death showered upon him on all sides: the general, Ricci, secretly effected an interview between him and a fortune-teller who prophesied the speedy vacancy of the Holy See. The leagued courts nevertheless prevailed. The last pretext for resistance failed: Maria Theresa, persuaded by the Emperor, her son, consented to the suppression of the society. The brief of abolition appeared July 20, 1773. The Holy Father reviewed therein the charges that were brought against the Jesuits, and, without absolutely admitting them, acknowledged that "the members of the company had not a little disturbed the Christian republic, and that, for the good of Christianity, it was better that the order should disappear." The remaining houses of the order were closed; the general, Ricci, was imprisoned in the château of Saint-Ange; and the court of Versailles once more restored to the Pope Avignon and Comtat Venaissin, which Choiseul had intended to retain, and which the Revolution was soon to annex definitively to France.

The forebodings of Clement XIV. were not immediately realized. For several months after this great act, his health remained good, and he recovered his spirits. One day (towards the end of the Holy Week of 1774), he was seized with an intestinal disturbance, followed by a heavy chill. Fatal symptoms succeeded, and never more left him; his whole physical system became disordered; his reason wandered; and the unhappy pontiff recovered self-consciousness only to die after prolonged tortures (September 22, 1774). The cry at Rome was, that he died of *aqua tofana*. The question remains uncertain. The Cardinal de Bernis, the French ambassador at Rome at the epoch of the catastrophe, after a secret inquiry into the circumstances of the illness and death of Clement XIV., drew up a statement which should be found in the archives of foreign affairs, *but which has disappeared*. The Cardinal de Bernis was convinced of the poisoning of Clement XIV.; and, according to his testimony, Pope Pius VI., Clement's successor, had no more doubts of it than himself.¹ But, on the other hand, the Spanish minister Moñino

¹ "The manner of the Pope's illness, and, above all, the circumstances of his death, cause it to be commonly believed that it was not natural. . . . The physicians who were present at the opening of the corpse express themselves cautiously, while the surgeons use less circumspection." — Despatch from Bernis, September 28. "Every one cognizant, like myself, of certain documents communicated to me by the late Pope, will consider the suppression (of the society) perfectly just and necessary. The circumstances which preceded, accompanied, and followed the death of the late Pope,

(Florida-Blanca) and the Neapolitan minister Tanucci did not believe in it, and thought that Clement had died through the fear of poison, and the too free use of antidotes, and not by poison. They accused the Jesuits of having really killed the Pope by a system of terror organized around him, and of *boasting* of a crime which they had not committed in order to cause themselves to be believed more formidable than they were.¹

The rôle of the great association created in the sixteenth century for the purpose of opposing the free development of the mind and of human individuality had not ended: the victory of the eighteenth century was not final. The Jesuits were destined to reappear, and to see Jansenism, and, almost entirely, Gallicanism itself, that tradition which had formerly saved France from sharing in the profound decline of the *kingdoms of obedience*,—the ultramontane Catholic nations,—effaced before them. It was not by their own strength that the Jesuits would revive and invade the Catholic Church, but through the weakness of others, the enervation of the public mind. Two causes were destined to produce their return: one was the tendency to concentration, the effort towards unity at any price in the Church, after the terrible blows of the Revolution; the other was the unsatisfying nature of the result produced in the moral and religious domain by the philosophy of the eighteenth century, the principles of which, whether fatalistic and materialistic, or purely critical, had obstructed the growth and fettered the development of the principles of regeneration and life. Thence arose, for a time, a reaction towards the past,—a reaction not of enthusiasm and living faith, but of discouragement, powerlessness, and fear,—a reaction religious on the surface, but ill disguising an indifference at heart to the interests of morality and the questions of the conscience. The Christianity of the Jesuits, that which is satisfied with ap-

at once excite abhorrence and compassion."—Despatch of October 26, 1774. "I shall never forget two or three bursts of confidence which the Pope (Pius VI.) let fall before me, from which I was enabled to judge that he was fully cognizant of the unhappy end of his predecessor, and that he was unwilling to run the same risks."—Despatch of October 28, 1777. See Saint-Priest, *Suppression de la Société de Jésus*. M. de Saint-Priest has made fruitless efforts to discover the statement announced to the minister by the Cardinal de Bernis, in his letter of October 26, 1774. It must be remarked that Bernis had no personal animosity to the Jesuits, and that, in the course of the negotiations, he had shown so much forbearance with respect to them as to draw upon himself warm reproaches from the court of Spain.

¹ *Les Jésuites jugés par les rois*, etc., pp. 173–178. Neither does Father Theiner, in his *Histoire du pontificat de Clément XIV.*, the panegyrist of this pontiff, and consequently strongly opposed to the Jesuits, admit the theory of poison.

pearances, was alone capable of adapting itself to that state of society which the prophetic glance of Bossuet had seen beyond the eighteenth century as yet unborn.¹

Another series of events had unfolded side by side with the affair of the Jesuits, to end in a still more striking catastrophe, and one which would shake ancient French society even more profoundly. The strife between the magistracy and the court had been renewed on account of the finances, as usual, but on a much greater scale; and, after a brief truce, had been pursued to the end like the combat between the two systems of government, one of which ended by overthrowing the other, on the eve of being swallowed up itself.

The narrative of the *Seven-Years' War* must have given some idea of the state in which the finances would be found at the end of this deplorable struggle. The annual burdens were immense; the perpetual *rentes*, by themselves alone, amounted to ninety-three million five hundred thousand francs, on a capital of two thousand one hundred and fifty-seven millions; and there existed besides a large body of life-*rentes* and tontines, without mentioning the floating debt and the alienations of the revenues. The future revenues had been forestalled to the amount of nearly eighty millions. The outside expenses of the war had not even been acquitted. The government was forced to pay, from 1762 to 1769, from thirty-three to thirty-four millions of arrears of the subsidies granted to Austria, together with the blood of France, for the purpose of supporting a wholly Austrian war! It paid to English speculators the debts of Canada, which it had refused to pay to the unhappy Canadians, and the claims to which had been bought up for a song by these foreigners.

The government acquitted its obligations to foreigners, but began by forfeiting its pledges to the nation. Two edicts and a declaration of the King abolished the doubling and tripling of the

¹ See *The Age of Louis XIV.* vol. II. p. 285. Concerning the various phases of the affair of the Jesuits, see the *Mercur hist.*, 1756-1774, t. CXL.-CLXXXVI., — the index of each volume points to whatever relates to the Jesuits; Saint-Priest, *Suppression de la Société de Jésus*, a work written chiefly from the unpublished diplomatic correspondence; Flasseau, *Hist. de la Diplomatie française*, t. VI. liv. iv.; *Vie privée de Louis XV.* t. IV. pp. 44-63; W. Coxe, *Hist. d'Espagne sous les Bourbons*, t. IV. ch. lxiv., t. V. ch. lxx.; *De la Destruction des Jésuites en France*, appended to the *Mém. de Madame du Hausset*, p. 166; Bachaumont, *Mém. secrets, passim*; Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XV.*; *Hist. du parlement de Paris*, ch. lviii.; *Mém. de l'abbé Georgel* (ex-Jesuit), t. I. The agreement of the Jesuit Georgel and the Englishman Coxe, in opposition to Choiseul, is curious. — *Les Jésuites jugés par les rois*, etc., published by L. Viardot; *Hist. du pontificat de Clément XIV.*, by Father Theiner, priest of the oratory.

capitation-tax, and the third twentieth from January, 1764, but prolonged for six years the second twentieth, which was to have ended on the recurrence of peace, and the two sous per livre of the income-tax, which had survived the income-tax itself: it likewise prolonged for five years the gratuities of the towns, which were to have ended in 1765; after which time, according to the very words of the edict which had exacted them, "they could not be continued under any pretext whatsoever." The hundredth penny on the transfers of personal property in the nature of realty, with the addition of six sous per livre, was reëstablished. All these funds were not even to be employed in the sinking of the debt, but were to be paid into the treasury. The first twentieth, estimated at twenty millions annually, was set apart for the re-establishment of the sinking fund created in 1749: consequently, the first twentieth, instead of ending ten years after peace, in conformity with the royal promise, was prolonged indefinitely, or, at least, was transformed into a new real-estate tax, the just apportionment of which was to be fixed, as well as the equalization of the villain-tax, by means of a general terrier of the landed property, which was to be executed within seven years. The promise of the execution of a terrier, a project already conceived under Dubois, rested on no guarantee. Lastly, the royal edicts prescribed the liquidation, that is the compulsory reduction and redemption, of all *rentes* except those on the Hôtel de Ville, and of various charges, arrearages, life-*rentes*, and tontines, which was a manifest violation of public faith.¹

The parliament of Paris, instead of registering these acts, warmly remonstrated, and requested that the operations of the sinking fund and the payment of arrears might be placed under its superintendence, and that a speedy termination might be fixed for the first two twentieths and the gratuities. It rejected the new taxes and the compulsory liquidation (May 19, 1763). The King enforced the registration in a bed of justice (May 31).

Public opinion broke forth indignantly. During this interval, the equestrian statue of the King, the work of Bouchardon, had been raised in the square, since so tragically celebrated, which then bore the name of Louis XV. The four corners of the pedestal were supported by Strength, Peace, Prudence, and Justice. One morning, the following inscription was found at the foot of the royal effigy: —

¹ Bailli, *Hist. financière de la France*, t. II.

"Oh beautiful statue! oh beautiful pedestal!
The Virtues on foot, and Vice on horseback."

This was followed by another:—

"He is here, as at Versailles,
Without heart or bowels (of compassion)."

Public opinion loudly applauded the new remonstrances which followed the bed of justice (June 24, August 10). The parliament of Paris held a language therein such as had never before fallen upon royal ears. It stigmatized, in the plainest terms, "the manifest infraction of the engagements, most authentically contracted, and the promises most solemnly given by the King." It openly attacked the beds of justice as subversive of all legal order.¹ It affirmed that "the verification of the laws by the parliament is one of those laws which cannot be violated without violating *that by which kings themselves exist*. . . . The authority of the King is endangered thereby, together with the most essential and most sacred constitution of the monarchy!" . . . Remonstrances from the Court of Aids accompanied those of the parliament of Paris (July 23). This special tribunal, under the enlightened and generous direction of its first president, Malesherbes, assumed a moral authority which was altogether new. "The Court of Aids is unwilling to believe," say the remonstrances, "that, if the solemn promises of the King had been placed before his eyes, he could ever have taken it upon him to contradict himself so openly." Malesherbes then presented, in the name of his court, an elaborate picture of the disorder of the collection of the taxes, and the mixture of anarchy and tyranny that characterized the administration of finance, and showed the shameful secrets of this administration, screened by every means from the cognizance of the superior courts and all the regular bodies. Royalty had formerly established special tribunals in order to take away the prosecutions for taxes from the ordinary tribunals: now these special tribunals themselves were paralyzed by the unqualified despotism of the intendants and their delegates. If the tribunals attempted to take cognizance of the fiscal peculations and acts of violence which had become habitual,

¹ *Mercure historique*, t. CLV. pp. 47-137. — The complaints of the parliament prove, that, at the very moment when agriculture was rehabilitated by political economy, the fiscal agents were trampling upon the principles admitted by Colbert and all statesmen worthy of the name in favor of the agricultural classes. "Unfortunates are daily seen, compelled to pay their taxes by selling their grain, their cattle, and even their implements of labor." — *Ibid.* p. 147.

the Council of State quashed their sentences, or raised up causes for setting them aside. The Court of Aids added, that if any one dared accuse of exaggeration the pictures, so often presented, of the distress which was weighing upon the rural districts under this arbitrary régime, the court then entreated the King *to listen to his people themselves by the voice of their deputies in a convocation of the States-General of the kingdom.*¹

It was the first echo of Mabli's idea, the first official appeal to the days of 1789!

The provincial parliaments worthily followed the example that had been set them by Paris. The remonstrances of the parliament of Rouen were at least as remarkable for their lofty and philosophic character as those which we have just cited (August 5). This parliament, as early as 1760, in again demanding its Provincial Estates of Normandy, abolished for the past century, had forcibly claimed, in behalf of the nation in general, the *antique and imprescriptible* right of voluntarily *accepting* the law,—a right which belonged to the magistrates in the interval of the session of the estates. The remonstrances of 1763 manifested the influence of the economists in the principles advanced by the Norman magistrates concerning the existence of this right of property “prior to all political institutions.” The definition of the right of the citizen and the limits of the right of the State was conceived in the most liberal spirit. The parliament of Rouen claimed a statement of the revenues and the public burdens, and entreated the King to abolish the shame and scandal of the *royal orders on the treasury*, and to reduce the indefinite and inextricable multitude of taxes to a single and only one; that is, to demand of Normandy its proportional contribution to the necessities of the State, and to suffer it to apportion this itself.²

The parliament of Rouen maintained its opposition with even more vigor than the courts of Paris. The edicts having been forcibly inscribed on its registers by the governor of the province, it protested against them, and forbade their execution within its jurisdiction, under penalty of extortion (August 19). Its decree was annulled by the Council of State, and stricken from its registers by force: it replied by annulling the annulment. The

¹ *Mémoires pour servir à l'hist. du droit public en matière d'impôts, ou Recueil de ce qui s'est passé de plus intéressant à la cour des aides, de 1756-1775*, Brussels, 1779, in quarto, p. 108, et seq.; Bailli, *Hist. financière de la France*, t. II. pp. 159-164.

² *Floquet, Hist. du parlement de Normandie*, t. VI. pp. 370-381; *Mercurie historique*, t. CLV. p. 263.



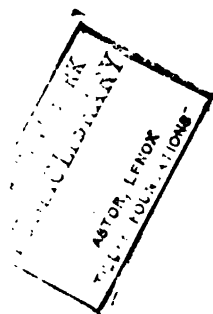
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council rejoined in violent terms. The parliament of Rouen resigned in a body (November 19).¹

The same resistance and analogous incidents were witnessed at Toulouse, Grenoble, Besançon, &c. The retrogressive spirit agreed with the innovating spirit in resisting the edicts. The fanatical parliament of Toulouse, still reeking with the blood of Calas and the pastors of the *wilderness*, opposed despotism, as it had slain the Protestants, in the name of traditions. Matters came to such a pass, that the governor of Languedoc, the Duke de Fitz-James, put the members of the parliament under arrest in their houses. The parliaments of Aix and Bordeaux protested with indignation against this *unheard-of outrage* upon justice. The parliament of Bordeaux took the offensive against the administration by the institution of a commission for the purpose of repressing the excesses of the fiscal agents (November, 1763).

The government compounded. It was the policy of Choiseul, more measured and profounder than might have been presumed from his imperious levity, to conciliate the great bodies that might be the props, as they were the obstacles, of the declining monarchy. The indolence of Louis XV. submitted to this policy, against which his pride revolted. A declaration of November 21 demanded of the parliaments, chambers of accounts, and courts of aids, memorials on the means of improving and simplifying the state of the finances; promised some diminutions in the gratuities and other taxes; and abolished the hundredth penny on collateral inheritances, — a tax which the parliament of Rouen had assailed with an altogether physiocratic exaggeration, as doing violence to property. The government gave hopes of abridging the duration of the twentieths, and also revoked the compulsory reduction of its debts, announced under the name of liquidation. The parliament of Paris registered the declaration, although the inflexible parliament of Rouen had written to dissuade it from doing so.

The system of compromise continued. A new comptroller-general, M. de Laverdi, was taken from the benches of the parliament of Paris, where he had signalized himself in the affair of the Jesuits (December 12, 1763). He began his career by sending to the treasury a large sum, which the farmers-general had been

¹ In the protest against the compulsory registration, it had declared that it would unceasingly invoke the authority of the fundamental laws of the kingdom, which associated the parliament with the ministry in the legislation. — *Merc. historique*, t. CLV. p. 297. See also, in its remonstrances, the thrilling details concerning the iniquities of the farming of the aids and the salt-tax. — *Merc. historique* of September, 1763.

accustomed to offer as a present to the comptrollers-general on their entrance into office. He ascertained that the farmers-general had made a profit of eighteen millions in three years on the salaries of their employés by deducting therefrom the three twentieths and other taxes, without accounting for them to the treasury. This incident will serve to show the state of the accountability. Laverdi did not lack good intentions for the reëstablishment of order; but something more was needed than intentions!

The parliamentary storm was not entirely appeased. The provincial courts were still agitated. The parliament of Toulouse decreed the arrest of its enemy, the Duke de Fitz-James, governor of Languedoc, and peer of France (December 11). The ministry took advantage of this undertaking to sow dissension between the parliament of Paris and the provincial courts. The parliament of Paris was urged to repel this encroachment on its exclusive rights as the court of peers; rights that were not recognized by the other parliaments, which claimed to be its equals in every thing. The parliament of Paris quashed the decree of the parliament of Toulouse, while warmly remonstrating against the executioners of arbitrary acts, and attributing to itself the cognizance of the case. The other parliaments protested in favor of their colleague Toulouse (December, 1763-January, 1764).

The government responded to the remonstrances of the parliament of Paris by a royal declaration, in which Louis XV. defended himself from the imputation of having wished to reign otherwise than by the observance of the laws and forms wisely established in his kingdom. He prescribed silence concerning every thing that had given rise to the declaration of November 21, 1763. The parliament of Paris registered the declaration.¹ The decrees of the council which had occasioned the resignation of the parliament of Bordeaux were annulled; and this court resumed its functions, so to speak, in triumph (March 10-14, 1764), as well as the parliaments of Toulouse and Grenoble, which were in the same category. This was the most humiliating step backwards that the government of Louis XV. had yet taken. The declaration demanding memorials on the finances from the superior courts, and the similar demands afterwards addressed by these courts to the inferior tribunals, had given an impulse to the public mind

¹ The trial of the Duke de Fitz-James was not ended thereby; but a royal declaration finally quashed the suit (January, 1766). The parliament of Paris registered the declaration only under the form of a *favor* granted by the King, which left the Duke *sullied*. He nevertheless became Marshal of France. — *Mém. du duc d'Aiguillon*, p. 18.

which speedily dismayed the cabinet. Political writings multiplied. Men already boasted of being as free as in England. The cabinet checked this effervescence by a prohibition to publish any writing concerning the administration of finance: the authors of these writings were merely authorized to transmit them to "the persons destined by the State to judge of them" (March 28, 1764).

The government continued its advances and concessions to the magistracy by way of compensation. The comptroller-general, Orri, about 1730, by the request of the farmers-general, who found the courts of aids too easy and too dilatory in the repression of offences with respect to the taxes, had caused four extraordinary commissions to be instituted, the judges of which, in the pay of the farmers, despatched the cases without granting further appeal, and earned their money by a celerity which was equalled only by their barbarity. The *Chamber of Valence*, above all, owed a detestable celebrity to a judge, Collot, who passed under the avenging pen of Voltaire.¹ Three of these commissions, dating from 1764, were replaced by new commissions taken from the courts of aids, and offering guarantees at least of morality and individual independence. The court of aids of Paris registered the institution of the one of these commissions which concerned it, while representing to the King, that, if extraordinary means of repression were necessitated by the multiplicity of the frauds, the frauds themselves were multiplied only through the excess and unjust assessment of the taxes, especially of the compulsory salt-tax.

An edict of December, 1764, on the sinking fund and the payment of the arrears due, also revealed the desire of conciliating the magistracy. This edict transformed the exigible debt, which the government was not in a condition to discharge, into a consolidated debt, and prescribed that one-tenth of all bills at sight, arrears of *rentes*, profits of the farmers, treasurers, etc., and salaries and emoluments, "except of those of judicial and police officers," should be retained for the purpose of increasing the sinking fund. A chamber was instituted in the parliament of Paris for the regulation of whatever concerned the sinking fund. The gratuities were again diminished. The collection of the second twentieth was to cease December 31, 1767; and that of the first, July 1, 1772.

This period of conciliation, or truce, was also signalized by an edict which regulated the administration of the towns and burghs, and restored to them the election of their municipal magistrates (August, 1764). This edict, remarkable for the character of uni-

¹ See *l'Homme aux quarante écus*.

formity which it stamped upon the financial administration of the municipal bodies, contained good provisions concerning the intervention of assemblies of notables in all the important acts of the municipal officers; but it took the revision of the municipal accounts from the chambers of accounts to give it to the bailiwicks and seneschalships, and, in case of appeal, to the parliaments, which did not improve the accountability. Another edict, of May, 1765, completed the first; reserved to the King the appointment of the *maires* from three candidates presented to him; and regulated the composition of the assemblies of notables, which were to be formed only of from ten to fourteen members, elected from the second order, under very aristocratic conditions. The praiseworthy portion of the preceding edict was not executed, and the financial disorder only continued to increase in the finances of the communes.¹

A personage whose importance was a great disgrace to France had just expired, shortly after the reconciliation of the court and the parliaments. Madame de Pompadour had died, April 15, 1764, at the age of forty-two. Habit had insured her reign till her last moments. Scarcely were her eyes closed when she was forgotten. Louis XV. saw with profound indifference the rupture by death of this bond of nineteen years. The disappearance of the favorite was productive of no immediate results in the government: Choiseul seemed no longer in need of support. France, nevertheless, had reason later to regret this woman! She had done all the evil that she could do: there was nothing more to fear from her, and France was destined to sink still lower!

She had done some good in her last years by introducing to the King her physician Quesnai, and, through him, the economic ideas.² It is improbable, however, that these ideas would have

¹ *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXII. pp. 405, 434.

² She also protected *Lemercier de La Rivière*, who was not only one of the most distinguished disciples of Quesnai, and an eminent economist, but also an energetic, able, and patriotic administrator. He conducted himself admirably in the West Indies, where he had been appointed intendant of the Windward Isles, at the height of the disasters of the Seven-Years' War, in 1759. The credit of the King was dead: he substituted his own, and borrowed several millions in his own name, by the aid of which he revived Martinique, just freed from a glorious but ruinous siege. He could not, however, prevent Martinique from succumbing under a second siege, undertaken with overpowering forces by the English in 1762; but this calamity furnished him new opportunities to manifest a boundless disinterestedness and devotion. He ruined himself in endeavoring to lessen the losses of the State, and was very imperfectly and tardily repaid for his advances. He acted the part there of Joseph Dupeix on a smaller scale. Sent back to Martinique on the recurrence of peace, he successfully attempted the

been productive of much effect with the thoughtless monarch, had they not been simultaneously infiltrated into his councils by other means, as we have indicated elsewhere. However this may be, a series of very significant measures, of great scope, announced that the only one of the innovating sects that was accepted by royalty and the parliament was beginning to make its way from the domain of theory into that of fact. As early as September 17, 1754, the ministry, struck by hearing it constantly repeated that England owed her agricultural prosperity to free exportation, had granted entire freedom to the inter-grain-trade of the kingdom, without requiring passports or permits from one province to another, to the two generalities of Languedoc and the generality of Auch, with complete freedom of exportation to foreign countries. It was designed successively to extend the freedom of exportation to the other provinces. In 1758, a decree of the council had permitted the commerce and transportation of wool, both native and foreign, throughout the kingdom, without import or export duties. The bureau of commerce and its agents closed their eyes to the innovations that were effected in manufactures, despite the regulations, at Lyons, Nîmes, and elsewhere. Incentives were offered to the clearers of uncultivated lands (August, 1761). A declaration of December, 1762, reduced to a term of fifteen years the patents of invention, before unlimited for the most part, to the great embarrassment of manufactures. May 25, 1763, the permission to carry on the grain-trade within the kingdom, free of duties, was renewed, and authority was granted to establish granaries of wheat. Lastly, the celebrated edict of 1764, preceded by wholly *physiocratic* considerations, granted full liberty of exportation by French ships, and of importation by all ships, with a duty of one per cent on importation, and one-half per cent on exportation. The freedom of exportation was to be suspended wherever wheat should have been twelve livres ten sous per quintal for

application of the free trade preached by the economists. The interests opposed to this principle obtained his recall. The following reply to the Duke de Choiseul will give an idea of the character and moral worth of the man: "I was in bed, with my leg opened in consequence of a malignant fever, when, in 1758, I received the first order to embark: I saw nothing but the King's commands, and set out. I am again in bed, with my leg opened by a new accident, when I receive your letter, ordering a similar proceeding: I see only the King's commands, and I shall go. As to my domestic affairs, they certainly will not make me hesitate, when my health has not the power to do so. I am but one person, monseigneur: any sacrifice on my part for the King's service will never cost me any thing." It is unnecessary to observe, that the King, here, means the country. We take these details from the interesting *Notice sur Lemercier de La Rivière*, by F. Joubreau, Paris, 1858.

three successive markets. It was understood that this restriction would be merely temporary, and would only last till the advantages of the freedom of trade were comprehended. International entrepôts were authorized.¹

February 13, 1765, letters-patent permitted the inhabitants of the rural districts, and of places where there were no masterships and trade corporations, to spin all kind of materials, and to manufacture and prepare all sorts of fabrics, in conformity with the regulations, and even to sell them in towns where trade corporations existed, after they had been examined and stamped by the bureau of merchants of each town. The rumor was circulated, on the one hand, that the masterships were about to be abolished; and, on the other, that the civil status was about to be restored to the Protestants.² The spirit of the age had greatly changed.

All the measures of the government were not, however, in conformity with the economic doctrines. For instance, the reduction of the rate of interest to four per cent among private individuals (June, 1766) could neither be approved by the theorists, who denied all interference of the State in the establishment of the rate of interest; nor the practical men, who were unwilling, at least, for the State to do more than second the natural course of events. Money was worth, in reality, more than four per cent; and the ministry had no other aim than to attract the money of private individuals to a new loan of five millions of life-*rentes* by making investment with the State more advantageous than private investment. The establishment of a new company for the slave-trade (1767) was something much more opposed to the principles of economic liberty, as well as of all philosophy and all humanity.

The economists had made such progress, that they well-nigh secured freedom of trade for the colonies; that is, the overthrow of the whole colonial system. The question was under discussion for two whole years in the bureau of commerce. The council of the King maintained, in general, the régime of reserved navigation, but made some concessions: two free ports were established at St. Lucia and St. Nicholas, in the West Indies; the duties between France and the colonies were diminished; and in May, 1768, complete freedom of trade was granted to Guiana.

¹ *Mercure historique*, t. CLVII. p. 143.

² See the letters-patent in the *Merc. historique*, t. CLVIII. p. 421. The Protestants were no longer called the *new converts* in the edicts, but the King's subjects, who should have been of the so-called reformed religion.

This was a trifling compensation for the disasters which the criminal lack of foresight of the ministry had recently drawn upon this colony. After the peace of 1763, Choiseul, dreaming of indemnifications for the losses of France, had cast his eyes on the vast tropical territory formerly called *Equinoctical France*, and had fancied that wherewithal might be found there to replace the Northern *New France*, Canada. The enterprise, so hazardous in any case, was conducted with deplorable imprudence. No pains was taken to study those beautiful and dangerous countries, where the luxuriant fecundity of Nature conceals so many snares for man. Husbandmen were attracted by brilliant promises from different countries, especially the Germans and Alsacians, more inclined to emigration, according to the tendency of the Teutonic races, than the French peasantry: they were embarked pell-mell, with a large number of the outcasts of the great cities, fit, at most, for those arts of luxury which would have been useless in an infant colony; and landed on the banks of the Kuru and the Salut Isles in the height of the rainy season of the tropics, without the necessary preparations having been made to receive them. Instead of the frame-houses which had been promised them, they were crowded together in wretched hovels. The provisions sent them were spoiled: disease broke out among these unfortunates, and their miserable encampments were soon nothing but cemeteries. Of about twelve thousand, probably two thousand at the most escaped. They communicated the scourge that was preying upon them to the former colonists of Cayenne, who were decimated and almost destroyed in turn (1763-1764). About the same time, a similar attempt, on a smaller scale, cost the lives of some hundreds of poor men who had attempted to settle without precaution at St. Lucia.¹

The prosperity of St. Domingo, Guadeloupe, Martinique, and the Isles of France and Bourbon, which had revived immediately after peace, and the rich colonial productions of which were constantly increasing, caused France too easily to forget this lugubrious episode of Guiana, that land of tragic destinies. The progress of the French Antilles was not arrested by some disturbances occasioned in these islands by the institution of the militia, and by two more general causes,—the arbitrary tendencies of the governors and the impatient spirit of the Creoles.

In the interior of France, agriculture was improving in spite of the fiscal and other obstructions: the *pays d'élections*, more op-

¹ See Desalles, *H'ist. des Antilles*, t. V. pp. 368-389. — *Mém. de Vergennes*, p. 255

pressed by the administration of finance than the *pays d'état*, were precisely those in which progress was manifested, owing to the superiority of the system of renting the farms adopted in the north over that of hiring them on shares, still in vogue in the south. Since the economists had brought agriculture into fashion, and agronomic societies were being formed on all sides, the example and assistance of the large landholders, who turned anew towards the soil, encouraged the farmers, and the freedom of the grain-trade inspired them with an altogether new ardor, which was signalized by the general increase in value of the leases. The poor peasant felt the effects of the consideration shown to the farmer in easy circumstances. The population increased, although slowly and feebly: too many social causes obstructed its growth. In 1767, the learned and laborious Abbé Expilli, as well informed as it was possible to be with the imperfect statistical resources of the times, estimated it at twenty-two million souls (he allowed but six hundred thousand inhabitants to Paris). Two other statisticians, Messance and La Michaudière, estimated it at twenty-two million five hundred thousand. It must have increased three, perhaps four million souls, from that time to the Revolution, owing to the improvements due to the spirit of the age.¹

The intestine peace, meanwhile, had not been of long duration, or rather it had never been fully established. For several years, an agitation had been prevailing in Brittany, which finally broke through all restraint, and extended over the kingdom. This agitation proceeded from two causes,—the affair of the Jesuits, and the violation of the ancient Breton liberties, which, so often perverted and repressed, were still claimed with obstinate constancy. As to the Jesuits, it was in this country that they had received the most terrible blows, but also in which they had the most persistent and restless partisans. The governor, the Duke d'Aiguillon, a crafty and profound courtier,² who belonged at once to the profligates and the bigots of the court, and who was at the same time the worthy nephew of Richelieu and the protégé of the Dauphin,

¹ Lavoisier and Lagrange estimated the population from 1789 to 1791 at twenty-five million souls; Dupont de Nemours, in 1791, at twenty-seven million souls. Among the practical ameliorations, due to the philosophers, must be cited the removal of the cemeteries from the cities. The decree of the parliament of Paris on this subject bears date March, 1765.

² He had begun his career as a courtier by sacrificing his mistress, Madame de La Tournelle, afterwards the Duchess de Châteauroux, to the King.

found himself pledged to the interests of the Jesuits, to please the Prince, his patron. Before the question was definitively settled, he organized, therefore, in the Provincial Estates themselves, an opposition to the parliament, in which La Chalotais was the ruling spirit; but he pursued a double, irreconcilable aim, — to rule public opinion in Brittany, and to wrest from it its privileges. The States, in which he had at first exercised a preponderant influence, owing to the recently introduced usage of subjecting the towns to the approbation of the royal commissioners in the choice of their deputies, soon violently turned against him, and united with the parliament. An order of the council, October 12, 1762, having dealt new and heavy blows to the constitution of Brittany, the hostility became almost unanimous. The parliament of Rennes, in concert with the States, in June and November, 1764, addressed strongly supported remonstrances to the King against the administration of the Duke d'Aiguillon, and the measures which this governor had suggested to the Council of State. The illegal participation of the royal commissioners in the municipal and provincial elections, and in the choice of the provincial assessors and tax-gatherers; the arbitrary collection of taxes not voted by the State, and not registered by the parliament; the waste, the dilapidations, the building of costly edifices in the towns at the expense of the province involved in debt, while the rural districts were crushed by the weight of the *corvées*,¹ and all pledges made between the States and the royal commissioners in this respect were violated, — such were the principal grievances enunciated. The foundation of all these remonstrances, from whatever direction they came, was invariably the same, — the awakening of that feeling of justice which is unwilling that men should be subjected to burdens to which they have not voluntarily consented. Philosophic law aroused here traditional law.

Choiseul disliked D'Aiguillon, whom he regarded as an aspirant to the ministry, and would willingly have sacrificed him; but Choiseul was not omnipotent, and D'Aiguillon was strongly supported. The Dauphin could not aid him much; but the familiars of Louis represented D'Aiguillon's cause to him as being that of the royal authority. The Bretons obtained nothing. The

¹ "An unfortunate *corvoveur*, who paid forty sous capitation-tax, and who had nothing for his subsistence but what he could earn by his daily labor, was bound to keep in order nearly forty feet of the highway, estimated at nine livres a year." Besides, he was carried from one road to another, away from his home, etc. — *Merc. historique*, t. CLVII. pp. 632-647.

parliament of Rennes suspended its action. The King summoned it in a body to Versailles, and ordered it to resume its functions before he would reply to its remonstrances. The great majority of the parliament resigned (May, 1765).

The parliament of Pau did likewise in the same month, in consequence of its dissensions with its first president, who was devoted to the court. A president and three counsellors were arrested at Pau. The whole magistracy rose: the superior courts vied with each other in their protestations. Meanwhile the parliament of Paris became involved in a quarrel with the clergy, who, in their periodical assembly, had just manifested their regret at the expulsion of the Jesuits, and transgressed the *law of silence* by recurring to the eternal question of the Bull *Unigenitus*. The parliament quashed the acts of the assembly of the clergy of 1765, and even, retrospectively, the acts of 1760 and 1762, as contrary to the laws of the kingdom, which forbade these assemblies to occupy themselves, without the King's permission, with any thing else than the economic interests of the clergy. The council quashed the decree of the parliament. The clergy had granted a gratuity of twelve millions to the King. The acts of the assembly of the clergy were sent to all the nunneries and monasteries to be signed by the inmates. The council ended by renewing the *law of silence*, and referring to the King every thing concerning the acts of the assemblies of the clergy.

The fermentation continued in Brittany, where the discussion had become a sort of duel between La Chalotais and D'Aiguillon, the one representing despotism and Jesuitism, the other the philosophic spirit and the parliamentary spirit accidentally combined. La Chalotais came several times to Versailles to endeavor to overthrow his enemy: the latter, or his adherents, were not content with successfully resisting these efforts with the King, and strove to destroy the energetic attorney-general. Pamphlets, satires, and manuscripts, the ordinary symptoms of agitation in a country where the press is not free, circulated in Brittany, and from Brittany to Versailles. Two anonymous letters, couched in the most disrespectful terms, were addressed to the King in person. Louis XV. was incensed, and trouble in the cabinet ensued. The letters were sent to the Count de Saint-Florentin, with orders to discover the author. Saint-Florentin was that mediocre and contemptible secretary of State who had cowered, for forty years, in the corner of the ministry whence the *lettres de cachet* and orders for persecution were despatched against the

Protestants. He was, like Richelieu, the uncle of D'Aiguillon. A few days after, Saint-Florentin declared to the King that a young master of requests, M. de Calonne, had recognized the handwriting of La Chalotais. Louis XV. flew into a passion, without reflecting how improbable it was that an attorney-general, in correspondence with the cabinet, the ministers, and all the persons of importance in Paris, should have written anonymous letters to the King without disguising his hand. He wished to institute an extraordinary commission at the Arsenal for the purpose of trying the culprit and his accomplices ; for the anonymous letters were already only one incident of an extensive plot against the royal authority. He recoiled, however, before the parliament of Paris. The commission was appointed and dissolved within twenty-four hours, and the indictment was brought regularly before the criminal court of the Tournelle (July 18, 1765).

The affair was protracted without being quashed. After much discussion concerning the course to be adopted, the King came to a decision. November 11, La Chalotais, his son, and three counsellors, two of whom were named Charette, were arrested at Rennes. The members of the parliament of Rennes who had resigned their seats were summoned to resume their functions for the purpose of judging their colleagues. They refused. This result had been expected. A commission from the Council of State was sent to Rennes to conduct the trial in the place of the parliament. The informer Calonne accepted the post of attorney-general to the commission ! This young man, full of wit, daring, and immorality, was resolved to stop at nothing to attain success. The anonymous letters not being sufficient for the end proposed by the partisans of despotism and the avengers of the Jesuits, Calonne caused the private correspondence of La Chalotais, his son, and his friends, to be seized ; and seconded by another master of requests, Lenoir, afterwards lieutenant-general of police, he founded on this correspondence an indictment, in which the open concert of the parliaments for the defence of their common principles was transformed into a kind of conspiracy, with La Chalotais as its head ; and the union effected by this attorney-general between his parliament and the States of Brittany, into the beginning of a sedition, paving the way for a revolution in the kingdom, in conformity with the principles of the *Social Contract*, quoted and commented upon in the letters of La Chalotais.

A great noise and scandal ensued : at the rumor that the scaf-

fold was about to be erected for the courageous attorney-general of Rennes, the indignation of all France broke forth against Calonne, D'Aiguillon, and those of the ministers who lent them support. All the parliaments renewed their threatening demonstrations. Choiseul, hitherto reserved and neutral in appearance, forcibly represented to the King the improbability or exaggeration of the charges, and the danger of suffering the belief to gain credit among a public inclined to innovations, that men like La Chalotais and his principal parliamentary colleagues judged the doctrines of J. J. Rousseau applicable. D'Aiguillon, himself terrified, changed his tactics, and attempted to throw all the odium of the affair upon Calonne. The majority of the members of the commission declined acting:¹ the commission was dissolved, and the suit was referred to the *reorganized* parliament of Rennes, that is, to the minority who had not resigned, increased by a few renegades who had withdrawn their resignations, and some new counsellors created by the King. The parliament of Paris recommenced its remonstrances in behalf of the *true* parliament of Rennes, and the accused denied the competence of the *D'Aiguillon parliament*.

The violence of the excitement had been for a moment calmed, or at least suspended, by a mournful event. The Dauphin, Louis of France, had died December 20, 1765, at the age of thirty-six. He was of a melancholy character, resembling at once Louis XIII. and the Duke of Burgundy. War or public affairs would have reanimated his soul, indifferent to the pleasures and passions which govern the majority of mankind; but the jealous distrust of his father interdicted to him all serious employment of his activity. He was consumed with ennui. A disease of the chest, occasioned by imprudence, and aggravated by the voluntary negligence of a man that attached no importance to life, carried him off after a few months of languishing. There was an echo, as it were, of the regret that had formerly surrounded the tomb of the Duke of Burgundy; and the same illusions reappeared. More than one voice exclaimed, in the storms of '89, "*Ah! if the Dauphin had lived!*" It is probable, that, if the Dauphin had lived, he would have accelerated rather than dispelled the tempest.

¹ The commission had, nevertheless, done one useful thing: it had tried two hundred and thirty-five accused, who had been languishing in the prisons of Rennes in consequence of the suspension of the courts. The sinister details given on this subject in the *Memoirs of D'Aiguillon* (p. 24) forcibly show the consequence of this interruption of judicial proceedings, which had become the habitual weapon of the parliaments.

His heart was pure and sincere ; but his confidence was misplaced. The La Vauguyons and D'Aiguillons, and other similar personages, would have been deplorable counsellors for him ; and there is reason to believe that he would have blindly submitted to the influence of Rome and the clergy. " If I were called to the throne," he said, " and the Church commanded me to descend from it, I would do so." Such a prince would have been speedily crushed in an impossible reaction against the spirit of the age.¹

He left three sons and two daughters. The three sons were all destined to wear the crown : they were Louis XVI., Louis XVIII., and Charles X. The eldest was to perish amidst the ruins of the ancient régime : traditional royalty, for a moment revived in the midst of a new system of society, was twice to fall again with the other two brothers.

A flash of sensibility seemed to penetrate the heart of Louis XV. " Unhappy France ! " he exclaimed : " a King of fifty-five, and a dauphin of eleven ! " He was seized with the fear of death on seeing his son expire. He made his will ; reformed, if not his morals, at least the open scandal of them ; and became friendly with his family. A man so degraded could do little more than change his kind of vice ; and enlightened men began to fear lest the reign of debauchery should be succeeded by that of base and tyrannical bigotry. But the feeble desire to reform did not last long in Louis XV. ; and the death of his son's widow, the Dauphiness, Maria Theresa of Saxony, an amiable and sensible person, who had acquired some ascendancy over him, contributed to throw him back into his old habits (March, 1767). Her death revived the rumors of poison which had been whispered at the time of the loss of the Dauphin, and the coterie of the D'Aiguillons, the La Vauguyons, and the Jesuits, who had hoped to make use of the Dauphiness after the death of her husband, did not hesitate to propagate detestable calumnies against the Duke de Choiseul. They infected the mind of the new Dauphin, afterwards Louis XVI., with these infamous suspicions, and thus succeeded in irrevocably alienating him from the only minister that would have made any intelligent efforts to arrest the shameful decline of the monarchy during the last period of the reign of Louis XV.

Louis XV., meanwhile, had appeared to wish to prove to the public that the loss of his son would not weaken the royal power.

¹ *Mémoires du marquis d'Argenson*, p. 69 ; *Notice de Sénac de Meilhan*, appended to the *Mémoires de madame du Hausset*, p. 185.

He had significantly replied to the incessant remonstrances of the courts of justice, and the bold expositions of principles which they had vied with each other in displaying for years. March 3, 1766, he notified the parliament of Paris, in a bed of justice, that what had transpired at Rennes and Pau did not concern the other parliaments. The royal harangue, read by a counsellor of State, harshly reproved, in bitter language, the indecency and temerity of the combined remonstrances by which was manifested that *pernicious system of unity* which the King had already proscribed. "I will not suffer," said the monarch, "an association for resistance to be formed in my kingdom, . . . or an imaginary body to be introduced into the monarchy, which could only disturb its harmony." The maxims of the parliaments, summed up in a few lines, were condemned as innovations, which *contradicted* the institution of the magistracy and the true fundamental laws of the State. The King, in turn, set forth these fundamental laws from his own stand-point: "In my person alone resides the sovereign power, *the peculiar characteristic of which is the spirit of counsel, justice, and reason.* To me alone belongs the legislative power, independent of all authority, and subject to no division. . . . The entire public order emanates from me. My people are one with myself; and the rights and interests of the nation, which it is dared to make a separate body from the monarch, are necessarily united with mine, and repose alone in my hands."

He concluded by announcing, that, if the parliament of Paris did not set to the other courts of the kingdom the example of obedience, this scandalous spectacle of a rival contradiction of his sovereign authority would reduce him to the painful necessity of employing all the power which he had received from God to preserve his people from the fatal consequences of such undertakings.

The fundamental laws, according to the King, were neither more nor less imaginary than the fundamental laws according to the parliament; but this theory of divine right and mystical royal infallibility, this language of Louis XIV. and Bossuet uttered by the King of the *Parc-aux-Cerfs*, must have sounded in the ears of the men of the eighteenth century like an ironical parody on the days gone by.

The King caused a resolution of the parliament, of February 11, concerning the affairs of Brittany, to be stricken from the registers. To a deputation from the parliament of Rouen, summoned to hear two of its decrees likewise annulled, he said that he had taken an oath, not to the nation, as the parliaments dared affirm, but

to God alone. The other parliaments received similar admonitions. The parliament of Paris nevertheless decided, March 19, that the honor and reputation of the officers of the parliament of Rennes, under indictment, should be held unspotted so long as their trial had not been conducted by competent judges. On the 20th it decreed new remonstrances, but acknowledged, as *inviolable maxims*, that "the sovereign power belongs to the King alone; that he is accountable only to God; . . . that the bond which unites the King and the nation is indissoluble by nature; and that the legislative power resides undivided in the person of the sovereign." This seemed like laying down its arms; but the parliament, if it abandoned philosophical and national right, abandoned nothing of its own pretensions, and maintained, by a long and subtle commentary, its right to resist the King in the King's name and for his interest, and in some sort to oppose to the accidental and variable will of the man the permanent will of the institution, of the royal abstraction.

The court, however, had gained an advantage in causing the principles of monarchical right to be confessed by the parliament of Paris in the presence of the democratic theories which were becoming diffused throughout the world; but this advantage decided nothing. Some months passed without any event worthy of remark. November 22, the King decided to conduct in person the trial of the Breton magistrates, whom the *D'Aiguillon parliament* dared neither condemn nor absolve. December 24, letters-patent declared all prosecutions and proceedings relative to this affair suspended and closed; the King being unwilling, it was said, "to find any one guilty." La Chalotais and his fellow-prisoners were set at liberty, but exiled to Saintes. Upon this, new remonstrances ensued from the parliament of Paris, the other parliaments,¹ and the States of Brittany, demanding that not a shadow of suspicion should be suffered to rest upon faithful magistrates, and that they should be recalled, and reinstated into their seats. The King replied that "their honor was not compromised, but that he would never restore to them his confidence and favors." The harsh truths contained in certain of the letters found in La Chalotais' desk had stung Louis XV. to the quick.

The exiled magistrates continued to demand justice, and not

¹ The parliament of Bordeaux signalized itself by its energy. One of its decrees was annulled by the council for having enunciated "as a part of the personal liberty of a Frenchman, and of his property, systems, the effect of which would be destructive to all monarchy" (October 2, 1767). — *Merc. historique*, t. CLXIII. p. 522.

favor. Brittany remained turbulent. The *D'Aiguillon parliament* was the butt of the hostility and contempt of the great majority of the country. Provocations, street-fights, and duels attested the public fermentation. The government vainly strove to terrify the malecontents by multiplying the *lettres de cachet*. The exasperation was raised to its height by the announcement of an important regulation, which the court designed to impose on the States of Brittany, for the purpose of giving the force of law to most of the arbitrary innovations that had been permitted by the Duke d'Aiguillon. Choiseul adroitly seized the moment to interfere again with the King, and made him understand that it was necessary to make one concession in order to obtain another. The States of Brittany were convoked in extra session (February, 1768); and the King commissioned them to substitute a duke and peer and a counsellor of State for D'Aiguillon and the intendant of Brittany, Flesselles, as unpopular as the governor.¹ Satisfied as to persons, the States compounded as to principles. They peaceably discussed that regulation, at first so angrily received; and accepted, at least, a part of it. They still, indeed, demanded justice for La Chalotais, and obstinately insisted on the reëstablishment of the parliament of Rennes as it had been before the resignation of its members in May, 1765. D'Aiguillon's position was no longer tenable: he resigned the governorship, and returned to establish himself at court, where, well received by Louis XV., and provided with a command in the troops of the King's household, he thought only of avenging himself by every means on Choiseul.

The King finally yielded before Breton obstinacy. The *true parliament* of Rennes was reëstablished in July, 1769: not integrally, however; for Louis XV., faithful to his rancor, would never consent to the recall of La Chalotais. The parliament of Rennes was not satisfied with this imperfect reparation, and undertook to avenge its friends and to pursue its enemies to Versailles itself; which finally produced the decisive crisis of the prolonged conflict between the absolute authority and the magistracy.

During these changes, the financial embarrassment, which had been the first cause of the parliamentary rising in arms, had continued to become aggravated. The royal promises prior to peace had been violated in 1763: the promises of 1763 and 1764 were violated in 1767. The levy of two more sous per livre on the duties of the farms, the extension for six years of the various duties

¹ *Prévôt des marchands* of Paris in 1789, and massacred on the day of the taking of the Bastille. The tragic names of the Revolution begin to be heard in history.

forming part of the general farms, the prolongation of the second twentieth for two, then for three years, and of the gratuities of the towns, and still other imposts (January-June, 1767), called forth reiterated and ineffectual remonstrances from the parliaments, the courts of aids, and the chambers of accounts. Laverdi had been submerged by the disorder which he had thought for a moment to restrain. Accountability was destroyed; all verification was impossible: there were accounts of the treasury which were not made up until ten or twelve years after the expiration of the administration of the officers of indirect taxes, the operations of which they were designed to retrace.

Laverdi had fallen into discredit by his extreme incapacity, and had rendered himself odious to the public, and distrusted by Choiseul, by the support which he had given to the Duke d'Aiguillon in the affairs of Brittany; thus turning against the parliaments, from the ranks of which he had sprung. Choiseul succeeded in replacing him by one of his own men, the counsellor of State, Mainon d'Invaux (September 21, 1768). Laverdi left the debt increased one hundred and fifteen millions since peace: the sinking-fund had been only a bait; for much more was borrowed than was extinguished. In January, 1769, thirty-two million five hundred thousand francs had been forestalled on the revenues.

M. d'Invaux did not make a happy beginning in the comptroller-generalship. His expedients, exactly similar to those of his predecessor, being rejected by the parliament of Paris, which repented of having registered the edicts of 1767 for the levy of extraordinary taxes, the court had recourse to a bed of justice as early as January 11, 1769. The edicts imposed by the King again prolonged the second twentieth to July, 1772, and various duties on consumption to 1788; created four million of life-*rentes*; and overthrew, by new and unjust combinations, the engagements contracted in 1764 for the redemption of the arrears due. The first president, D'Aligre, addressed to the King an admirable speech against the edicts, in which he concluded by affirming that the two great remedies in financial matters were the reduction of the expenditures and the simplification of the collection of the taxes.¹ Several of the provincial parliaments surpassed the parliament of

¹ He admirably sums up the financial course of the government: "The loans and the taxes have been, for a number of years past, the source and supplement of each other. For want of sufficient security at the time of contracting the loans, they become, on the first year's maturity, the germ of a necessary tax; and this tax, which is not sufficient, is soon aided by another loan, which announces a new tax for the following year." — *Merc. historique*, t. CLXVI. pp. 179-188.

Paris in boldness: that of Grenoble and others forbade the collection of the second twentieth, and waged a warfare of decrees against the council.

The comptroller-general would have asked nothing better than to follow the advice of the first president, D'Aligré. He attempted a middle course. He presented to the council a plan for the reduction of the expenditures, with the abolition of many of the financial offices, the continuance of the two twentieths for ten years, and the creation of a lottery of one hundred millions, payable half in specie and half in royal stocks at the market rate, the shares in which were to consist of life-*rentes*. The plan was rejected. M. d'Invaux acted like a man of honor: he resigned his place, and refused the pension of ex-minister, which, he said, he had not earned. On the recommendation of the Chancellor de Maupeou, ex-first president of the parliament of Paris, summoned the year before to the cabinet, the King appointed to the comptroller-generalship a man who had been represented to him as being as bold as laborious, and fertile in resources, — the Abbé Terrai, a parliamentarian like Laverdi and Maupeou, but, like the last, formerly regarded with distrust by his company on account of his complaisance to the court, and raised in public opinion since the affair of the Jesuits (December 23, 1769).

Before entering upon the narrative of the grave intestine events which succeeded the accession of the new minister of the finances, and filled the remainder of the reign of Louis XV., we must cast a glance abroad, and follow the policy of Choiseul in Europe. Great catastrophes were in the course of preparation without as within France.

We must do justice to the memory of Choiseul by saying that his constant thought was to rescue France from the effects of the treaty of 1763. To reëstablish and reorganize her land and naval forces, and to put her in a condition one day to take her revenge; meanwhile to procure some indemnification for her losses, without giving rise to a premature renewal of the war; to strengthen and consolidate the system of the French alliances, without concealing from himself, that of her two allies, Austria and Spain, the first, which had cost her so dear, was infinitely less sure than the second; to rest his chief hopes of coöperation, therefore, upon Spain, and to encourage her with the warmest solicitude in the progressive course to which she was impelled by the counsellors of Carlos III.; lastly, to watch and strive to aggravate the embarrassments which England was beginning to experience, in order

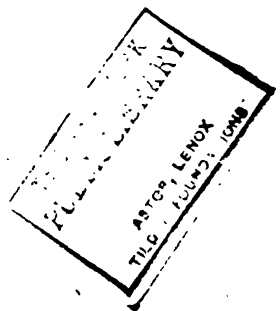


J. Chevalier pinxit

Basset sculp.

RENE CHARLES DE MAUPEOU,
*Vicomte de Bruyeres; Marquis de Morangles,
Seigneur de Noisy Montigny sur Aube et autres lieux,
Chevalier Conseiller du Roi en tous ses Conseils premier
President de son Parlement.*

Suite d'Odéon de Cail de Sac de l'Académie



to deter her from action abroad, — such were the ideas which guided Choiseul's conduct after the peace of Paris. We shall speedily perceive the fatal hiatus in his diplomatic plan; but the first part of his projects, the reorganization of the forces of France, was executed, so far as it depended on him, with much vigor and intelligence.

The accusation of wasting the public funds, often raised against Choiseul, was unjust. This minister, so fond of display and so prodigal of his own fortune, oftenest made a judicious use of the money of the State. It was not by the ministerial departments which were under his jurisdiction, it was not even and principally by the *royal orders on the treasury* of Louis XV. and the squandering of the court, that the finances were drifting to bankruptcy: the great cause of ruin was not, as we have many times repeated, the amount of the taxes that came into the treasury, but the amount of what was extorted outside the treasury, and that system of privileges and abuses which weighed upon all classes of society, and which had become, so to speak, society itself.

As to Choiseul, he had considerably diminished the foreign expenditures by reducing or abolishing the greater part of the permanent subsidies which France had been in the habit of paying, since the last century, to Sweden, the German princes, Switzerland, and sometimes Denmark, — subsidies which were very onerous, and of trifling utility. The only service hitherto rendered us by the Austrian alliance was that of having facilitated this economy, which a man familiar with the administration has estimated at twenty millions a year.¹

The military affairs, above all, had been well conducted by Choiseul. He had carried on the latter part of the Seven-Years' War with sixty millions a year less than his predecessor, the Marshal de Belle-Isle, who had required one hundred and eighty millions. As soon as peace was secured, he replaced the expenses and effective force of the army on nearly the same footing as before the war (the effective force at one hundred and fifty-two thousand seven hundred and fifty-eight men, and the expenses at about seventy millions); but at the same time he accomplished, without increasing the burdens, a military reform of the highest importance. The organization of the army was extremely irregular: the different corps of the same army differed from each other in the number of battalions, squadrons, and companies,

¹ *Sénac de Meilhan*, appended to *Madame du Hansset*, p. 187.

seau, who was still in Switzerland ; and invited him to repair to Corsica in the name of the government over which Paoli presided. The admiration expressed by Rousseau, in a note of the *Social Contract*, for the patriotic constancy of the Corsicans, had won him devoted disciples among the educated leaders of these heroic barbarians. Rousseau had predicted that Corsica was destined to astonish the world : the prophecy was realized, but otherwise than the prophet had intended. The Corsican child that was to *astonish the world* was about to be born on the rock of Ajaccio.¹

Had Rousseau decided to go to Corsica, he would have had the pain of witnessing the consummation of the oppression of his friends.

The cabinet of Versailles showed little fidelity to the Corsicans. It lulled them with vain hopes, and suffered matters to proceed to such a point, that the Genoese, losing all hope of ever reconquering the island, unwilling to humble their pride so far as to submit to the independence of their former subjects, and unable to discharge the debts which they had contracted to France, themselves proposed to Louis XV. the cession of the rights of their republic. May 15, 1768, a treaty, signed at Versailles, authorized the King of France to exercise all the rights of sovereignty over all the places and harbors of Corsica, as security for the debts due to him by the republic of Genoa. The cession was disguised under the form of a security in order to palliate the aggrandizement of France in the eyes of her rival, England, and even of her jealous ally, Austria. France, by a separate clause, gave Genoa an indemnity of two million francs.

The Corsicans learned with profound indignation of the price in store for their efforts and courage. Despite the vast disproportion of forces, they resolved to defend their liberty to the last extremity. Paoli hoped that the English, who had always encouraged him, would not tranquilly see France possess herself of so important a position in the Mediterranean. At the first attempt made by the French garrisons to penetrate into the interior, and to secure the communications between the places which they occupied, Paoli bravely endeavored to bar the way. He was unable to maintain his position on the narrow peninsula of Cape Corsica, which forms the northern point of the island ; but he strongly posted himself on the base of this peninsula. The lieutenant-general, De Chauvelin, landed, meanwhile, with some reënforcements, and issued letters-patent in the island, August 5, by which the King of France summoned his *new subjects* to recognize his sovereignty,

¹ August 15, 1769.





Fait par Camille

*Vaur (Noël de Tournay, Comte de)
13 Juin 1783. Maréchal de France. 1788.*

under penalty of rebellion. *The General and Supreme Council of State* of Corsica replied by a fit and touching proclamation, in which it declared that the Corsican nation would not suffer itself to be treated *like a flock of sheep sent to market* (August 28).

Acts corresponded to words. Chauvelin, after a trifling advantage on the banks of the Nebbio, attempted to pursue Paoli beyond the Golo with an insufficient force. The French, deployed over too great a space, were impetuously assailed by the inhabitants, who, rising in a body, drove them back under the guns of Bastia with a loss of a thousand or twelve hundred men (September-October). It became necessary, in the spring of 1769, to send a whole army under a new commander-in-chief, the Count de Vaux. This general officer, who had forty-two battalions and four legions (light corps, composed partly of infantry and partly of cavalry), planned a campaign which embraced the whole island. Paoli was unable to sustain himself against so formidable an attack. An heroic battle at the bridge of the Golo was the last struggle of Corsican liberty.¹ Corte, the seat of government, was forced to capitulate. It would not have been impossible to perpetuate a partisan warfare among the *maquis* and mountains; but the eternal scourge of Corsica, dissension, revived with the reverses. Paoli, abandoned by most of his adherents, and better fitted, moreover, to direct a regular government than to play the part of a guerilla chief, embarked at Porto-Vecchio on an English vessel with a few chosen friends (June 13, 1769). England, which had furnished him no other aid than munitions, arms, and a few volunteers, offered him at least an honorable asylum.

The French used an inglorious victory with considerable moderation. The general, De Vaux, and after him the governor, Marbeuf, strove to reconcile the Corsicans to French rule by showing them kindness and equity. An amnesty, roads made by the troops, useful institutions, the encouragement of agriculture and commerce, the maintenance of the municipal régime of the *podestas*, and the concession of provincial States under the title of *General Consult*, signalized this conciliatory policy. The first general consult, convoked at Bastia, August 15, 1770, swore allegiance to the King of France: nevertheless, murders, highway robberies, and partial insurrections, bloodily repressed and often repeated, unceasingly protested against the conquest. The ma-

¹ Voltaire relates, that, in an engagement on the Golo, the Corsicans made a rampart of their dead in order to gain time to load behind them before making a necessary retreat: their wounded were mixed with the dead to strengthen the rampart!

terial ameliorations due to the new masters were, besides, more than compensated for by the abuses of the French administration and fiscal laws. It may be said that the acquisition of Corsica was not completed until 1789, when the Corsicans became the free citizens of a free nation, and solemnly ratified their annexation to France, — a ratification confirmed in a still more striking manner in 1796, when the Corsicans, after having been separated from France by the events of the revolutionary war and the influence of their hero Paoli, threw off the English yoke, and spontaneously returned to France, under the influence of another Corsican hero, become the conqueror of Austria in the interval of becoming the ruler of Europe.

The conquest of Corsica was to be the last territorial extension of ancient France.¹

It seems surprising that England should have so tranquilly seen her rival take possession of a post so well adapted to command the Tyrrhene Sea and the coasts of Italy, and, above all, so disquieting to the possessors of Minorca. England, in fact, badly sustained her good fortune of the Seven-Years' War. This good fortune, by a contrary effect, increased, as if by destiny, in India, where every thing, exploits and mistakes, genius and crimes, turned to its advantage; but, in America, it appeared already on the point of falling by its own weight. The British government no longer showed either the vigor or the prudence necessary to rule the position of affairs within, and to maintain the ascendancy without, which England had won by her victories: it forbore interfering in the affairs of Europe, and managed affairs no better on this account at home. Confused and fruitless agitation absorbed both ministers and parliament. The favorite of the King, Lord Bute, had resigned his office shortly after peace; and repeated changes in the administration had restored William Pitt, become the Earl of Chatham, for a moment to power; but his ruined health paralyzed his strong mind, little fitted, moreover, for public affairs except in heroic moments, and he was only the shadow of himself during his second ministry. He recovered something of his eloquence and authority only on returning to the

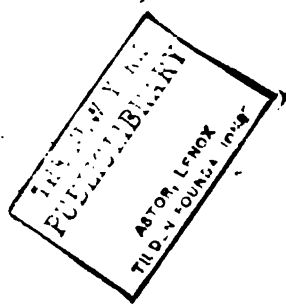
¹ *Mém. de Dumouriez*, t. I. liv. i.; *Mercure historique*, 1768-1770. See the tables of contents. — *Botta, Storia d'Italia*, t. IX. liv. xlv. The conquest of Corsica gave rise to a quarrel with the inhabitants of Tunis, who continued their piracy as before, to the injury of the Corsicans. A Franco-Maltese squadron bombarded Bizerta and Soosa in July and August, 1770, and forced the Bey of Tunis to capitulate. In 1765, France and Spain combined had inflicted a similar punishment on the people of Morocco.

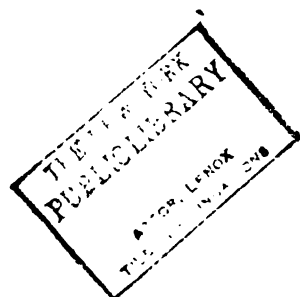


Portrait by W. H. H.

LORD CHATHAM.

Portrait by W. H. H.
Portrait by W. H. H.







Engraved by W. F. Adams.

benches of the opposition. Meanwhile, London was a prey to the disturbances, without greatness or serious aim, excited by a popular agitator, the celebrated Wilkes.¹ A crisis in cereals, which we shall speedily see likewise in France, was distressing the counties of England; and a black cloud was gathering on the other side of the Atlantic. On the very day after the conquest of Canada, the antagonism had declared itself between the two conquerors, the English of Europe and the English of America. The mother-country had undertaken to compel the colonies to bear their share of the enormous debt (£150,000,000) which weighed upon it, and which had been contracted in part to expel the French from America. This share was demanded in the form of taxes and duties established by act of parliament. The colonies replied, that freemen could not be taxed without their consent; and that they were not obliged to recognize, with respect to taxes, the authority of a parliament in which they were not represented. We shall have occasion to recur to this dispute, which ended in such important events, and which, in 1768, already disclosed the possibility of a violent and speedy separation.

The anxieties caused by the colonies contributed greatly to render England so moderate or so weak in the Corsican question. A few vain protests were her only weapons. It has been affirmed that Choiseul spared nothing to procure diversions against England, and that his agents strongly encouraged the American malecontents. No traces exist of these pretended influences.²

The English accused Choiseul of much more detestable intrigues. The English ambassador to Spain, Lord Rochford, pretended to have discovered a plot, formed between Choiseul and the Spanish ambassador Grimaldi, to burn the shipping and arsenals at Portsmouth and Plymouth during the winter of 1764-1765, and to attack Great Britain in the midst of this confusion. This accusation is devoid of proof, while it is certain that an Englishman by the name of Gordon, who had not acted without instructions from very high authority, was executed in 1769 for attempting to burn the port of Brest.

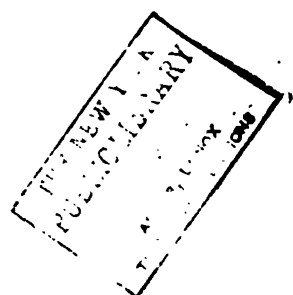
¹ Not, however, without future results; for from these movements dates the progress of democracy in England, through the publicity which the journals, despite ancient prohibitions, began to give the debates in parliament, and by the introduction of meetings.

² Under Louis XVI., the ministers Maurepas and Vergennes made investigations for the purpose of authenticating these rumors, and found no document that confirmed them. — *Flassan*, t. VII. p. 152.

The plan of Catharine was to make a *Piast* king, a king of Polish birth, devoted to her; to raise up the Dissidents as a rallying-point; and to reduce Poland to a state of vassalage without dismembering it. Frederick II., on the contrary, aimed at dismemberment. He had thought of this in his early youth, when he was only Prince Royal. In 1733, at the death of Augustus II., he had presented a memorial to his father, urging him to invade that Polish Prussia which so inconveniently separated Ducal Prussia from Brandenburg: now, master of all the Valley of the Oder by the conquest of Silesia, he aspired to extend his possessions on the Warta, the great affluent of the Oder, and, at the same time, to realize the desires of his youth concerning the mouth of the Vistula. He was ambitious to regulate the disjointed territory of Prussia at the expense of Western Poland, already shut in between Pomerania and Silesia as between the blades of a pair of scissors. In 1762, Frederick had induced his devoted ally, Peter III., to accept a first project of partition, which the fall of the unhappy Czar had postponed, but to which the persevering and astute Prussian did not despair of persuading Catharine II. They were already agreed on one essential point, — the maintenance of the Polish anarchy. They strove to effect an agreement concerning the present conduct, withholding their views with respect to the future. The King of Prussia accepted the candidate of the Czarina, — a nephew of the two princes Czartoriski, Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, a former lover of Catharine.

The cabinet of Versailles neither knew how to oppose nor to compromise. Louis XV. feebly attempted at first, in accordance with Austria, to support the pretensions of the House of Saxony; but the new Elector, Christian of Saxony, dying a few weeks after his father, Augustus III., his infant son and his brothers, who had no chance of success, were abandoned. The most reasonable course, then, would have been quietly to effect an agreement with the Czartoriskis, and even, perhaps, to accept the secret advances of the Czarina's candidate, Poniatowski. Catharine herself offered to act in concert with France. It would have been good policy to have accepted this, for the purpose of afterwards supporting in their projects of reformation, in opposition to the Machiavellianism of Catharine, the men whom she was sustaining at that moment. Nothing of the kind was done: Choiseul rejected the Czarina's proposals, continued his alliance with the party opposed to the Czartoriskis, and strove to induce the Turks to protest against all Russian interference in Poland. Louis XV., meanwhile, or-





dered the French agents, through the medium of the Count de Broglie, the head of the secret diplomacy, not to thwart the election of Poniatowski. The policy of France was not even consistent with itself.

During the interval, the preliminary *dietines* were convened. The Czartoriskis found themselves outnumbered. They called in the Russians! The greatest of political crimes—appeal to foreign invasion—had become habitual in this unhappy country. The regenerators of Poland imitated the sons of Æson, who delivered up their father to the magician's knife in order to rejuvenate him!

At the same moment, a double declaration of France and Austria appeared, which recommended no candidate, but approved, in advance, of any free election, whether the candidate elected were a *Piast* or a foreigner. France formally promised to support a free election (March 15, 1764). The month after, Catharine II. and Frederick II. engaged by a treaty (April 11) to prevent the establishment of hereditary transmission and arbitrary power in Poland, to protect the Dissidents, and to secure the election of a *Piast*. They issued a declaration against any plan of dismemberment. The Russian and Prussian ambassadors at Warsaw had already prevented the publication of a plan to abolish royalty for the purpose of replacing it by a senate, and signified the opposition of their masters to all alteration of the Polish constitution in any direction whatever. This lively solicitude for the Polish constitution on the part of such neighbors suffices to give an idea of this constitution.

The Diet of Convocation, which preceded that of Election, opened May 7. In the presence of the Russian bayonets, the *patriots*, amidst the most dramatic incidents, declared the Diet broken off, and withdrew. The Czartoriski party remained, and attempted to accomplish its reformatations. It promulgated a multitude of useful regulations; but, when it attempted to touch the taxation, and, above all, the *liberum veto*, and to replace unanimity by the plurality of votes, Russia and Prussia stopped it short. The Diet, or rather the minority which had constituted itself into a Diet after the withdrawal of the majority, gave way before the interdiction of foreign powers when it was in question to save Poland, and regained its independence only when the rejection of the petitions of the Dissidents was in question; as if religious fanaticism had inherited the energy which was no longer awakened by national feeling. It even went so far as to deprive the Dissidents of some

of the rights which they had preserved or recovered. The Czartoriskis were forced to yield to the mad reaction that broke forth around them.

The movements attempted by the *patriots* in Poland and Lithuania failed, despite a few brilliant strokes, during the legislative debates at Warsaw. The cabinet of Versailles was not in a position to keep the promise of aid which it had thrown out so lightly, and cared little to do so; and the Austrian cabinet, which was better able to act, and whose coöperation was necessary to France, was by no means willing to give this coöperation. The death of Madame de Pompadour, which Maria Theresa did not hesitate to deplore officially, as a "very great loss to the King and to France,"¹ had just loosened the bond of the Austro-French alliance. Maria Theresa and Kaunitz did not rely on Choiseul as on Madame de Pompadour, and had not forgiven this minister for having a policy of his own, instead of being the passive instrument of Austrian policy.

France and Austria, nevertheless, took a decided but wholly negative step; namely, the withdrawal of their ambassadors from Warsaw by way of protest against the violation of electoral liberty. This ended only in completely abandoning the field to the Russians and Prussians. Poniatowski was elected September 7, 1764, on the official recommendation of the two powers. Instead of the hundred thousand horsemen that formerly filled the sacred field of Wola to overflowing, but four thousand nobles came to the Diet where were celebrated for the last time the rites of the royal elections of Poland.

Public opinion was little excited in France. Men were accustomed to see foreigners impose kings on Poland: they perceived in it only a new crisis of an inveterate malady, and did not understand that this crisis differed from the preceding ones, and that it announced the end. Public opinion, moreover, as has been remarked by the most recent historian of the *Partition of Poland* (M. de Saint-Priest), was not at that time favorable to the Poles. The fanaticism with which the Jesuits had inspired this unhappy country, the tragic recollections of the affair of Thorn,² and the refusal to restore equal rights to the Dissidents, rendered the cause of Polish independence unpopular in this society, swayed by a cosmopolitan philosophy which comprehended the questions of humanity much better than those of nationality. Rousseau and Mably

¹ Correspondence of the minister of foreign affairs, in Saint-Priest, 47.

² See vol. I. p. 127.

had not yet thrown the weight of their authority into the scale. Poland rudely shocked French, or rather European opinion, which Frederick, and, above all, Catharine, flattered with infinite art. *The Great Frederick* had only to live on his renown; but the Czarina set to work to efface the King of Prussia himself in the eyes of the philosophers. She took the place in the affections of the patriarch of Ferney that Frederick had occupied in his best days; entreated D'Alembert to superintend the education of her son; employed the most seductive grace in imposing her favors on Diderot; sent assistance to the families of Calas and Sirven; translated into Russian, with her imperial hand, the *Belisarius* of Marmontel; and announced to the philosophers that she had taken more than five thousand serfs from the Muscovite Church, thenceforth supported by the State (it is true that this was for the purpose of conferring upon the State the serfs of the Church), and that she was convening delegates from all the peoples subject to her rule, at St. Petersburg, in order to prepare with them a universal and uniform system of jurisprudence. She sent to Voltaire, by an officer of her guards, the letter of instructions, which she had drawn up with her own hand for the commission charged with the task of framing the plan of the new code. Almost every thing was French in this Russian letter of instructions, which was little else than a mosaic of the contradictory ideas and formulas of Louis XIV., Montesquieu, the economists, from whom she borrowed their *rational despotism*, in the most softened terms,¹ however, and even the parliamentarians. She believed herself sure enough of her phantom of a senate to grant it the right of refusing the registration of laws contrary to the constitution of the State. Whole chapters were copied from the *Spirit of Laws*. The words *citizen* and *country* were lavishly employed in a book designed for the representatives of a hundred barbarous tribes incapable of attaching any meaning to these great words. Just maxims, ingenious considerations, but, above all, religious tolerance proclaimed from an imperial throne, and a certain tendency towards the gradual emancipation of the serfs,² closed the eyes of

¹ She raised the enthusiasm of the economists to its height by summoning Lemer cier de La Rivière to aid her in the preparation of her code. Lemer cier did not arrive until shortly after the time appointed by Catharine. When he came, she had something else in her mind, and had already ceased to care for it. Lemer cier returned, greatly disappointed.

² Catharine, however, entered only with reserve upon this point. She expressed a doubt as to the utility of serfdom for the good of the State, and affirmed, that, nevertheless, the serfs should not be emancipated in large masses, but that, for the sake of the

the philosophers to the illusions and absurdities in this great farce of philosophic legislation, designed for the Cossacks, the Bashkeers, and the Calmucks. Human nature is so complex, that Catharine may have been partly sincere in her rôle, and have believed in good faith in her fame as a legislator. The government of Louis XV. also took the matter in earnest, since it interdicted all publication of Catharine's *Instructions* in France, apparently as too favorable to parliamentary pretensions.¹

The stake most important to Catharine was being played in Poland. The Czartoriskis were renewing their attempts at reform. The new King, weak and trifling, but by no means ill disposed, was inclined to second his uncles. The Diet of Coronation, which succeeded that of Election, encroached upon the *liberum veto* by adopting, *by a plurality vote*, various reforms and a customs law. An amnesty reopened Poland to the *patriots* who had been exiled after their fruitless rising in arms. Catharine proposed to suffer Poland to levy a standing army of fifty thousand men, on condition of an offensive alliance with Russia. This was refused; and a defensive alliance alone was offered her.

Catharine began to turn against her former protégés. Frederick II. urged her to this course with all his might. He knew that Stanislaus-Augustus dreamed of espousing an archduchess, and rendering himself hereditary; and that Austria cherished this hope. He had a double motive for inciting Catharine to become absorbed in the affairs of Poland: the first was to thwart the projects of Stanislaus and his uncles; the second was to cause Catharine to lose sight of a great design, which by no means suited the Prussian policy. The Czarina, jealous of the *Southern Alliance* formed by Choiseul, aspired to organize a *Northern Alliance*, in which Russia would have the preponderance. Choiseul received an intimation of this design, and thenceforth turned his atten-

progress of agriculture, it was essential that they should have something of their own. This progress has not taken place; the Russian serfs still live in common; and future revolutions will show the consequences (written in 1853). A descendant of Catharine is courageously beginning, at this moment, the great experiment of transforming the serfs into landed peasantry (1859).

¹ Catharine, more daring than Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau, declared herself opposed to capital punishment, with a trifling reservation: "When a citizen, deprived of liberty, still has relations and a power that may disturb the tranquillity of the nation." — *Instruction I.* p. 77. It was doubtless by virtue of this reservation that the Czarowitz Ivan, the grand-nephew of Peter the Great, formerly set aside from the throne by Elizabeth, had just been murdered, August 16, 1764, in the prison where he had been immured from childhood. Elizabeth and Peter III. had spared this dispossessed pretender to the throne; but Catharine had no such scruples.

tion, with all the impetuosity of his character, to those interests of the North and the Continent which he had so much neglected. He resumed the immediate direction of foreign affairs, and sought to raise up embarrassments everywhere in the way of Catharine, but through hostility to Russia far more than through sympathy for Poland. The movements of Poland were to him only a means, whereas its safety should have been its end.

The Russo-Prussian tyranny continued to screen itself before Europe under the mask of tolerance. Reiterated appeals in favor of the Dissidents were addressed to the Polish Diet by the two powers at the same time that a *casus belli* was set up in the attacks on the *liberum veto*, and Russian regiments were sent to live as bailiffs on the lands of King Stanislaus and his friends in order to punish their faint attempts at resistance. The reformers yielded on the main point,— the *liberum veto*. The body of the *nation*, that is, the petty nobility, showed insane delight, as if this were the preservation of liberty. The *patriots*, in their turn, were supported by the Russians against the reformers.

The Dissidents, meanwhile, had not obtained full satisfaction. The Protestants *confederated* together in Polish Prussia under the direction of an agent of Frederick ; and forty thousand Russians entered Poland to support them. The main body of the Catholic nobility, likewise at the instigation of the Russians and Prussians, formed another confederation for the abolition of the reforms which the Czartoriski party had established since 1764 ! The Russian agents insinuated that the Czarina would permit the dethroning of Poniatowski (March-May, 1767). It is appalling to see how far a nation can lose political instinct, and fail to recognize its real dangers and real enemies. The delegates of the great confederation of Radom, scarcely assembled, were surrounded by the Russian troops, and constrained to sign an act demanding the guarantee of Russia for all the laws to be established in the coming Diet, and complete satisfaction for the Dissidents. The Russians exercised the greatest violence in the elections to the Diet, and, when it was assembled (October, 1767), forced it to delegate unlimited powers to a commission which held its sessions at the house of Catharine's ambassador, and did little but write under his dictation. The Bishops of Cracow and Kiev, and the Palatine of Cracow and his son, having attempted to struggle against this insolent despotism, were carried off, and sent to Siberia. The commission decreed the equality of the Dissidents and the Catholics, save a few reservations with respect to eligibility to

the throne, and to the Catholics who changed their religion. The necessity of a *unanimous vote* in all the decisions of the Diet concerning the affairs of the State was sanctioned; and it was decreed that these laws could no longer be abrogated, *even unanimously!* Naturalization in Poland was granted to a multitude of Russians in order to form the nucleus of a nobility of the Greek faith. Some improvements were introduced: they were needed to justify the Muscovite supremacy. The right of life and death over the peasants was taken from the nobles; tribunals were instituted for suits between nobles and serfs; and pecuniary composition of crime, a relic of ancient barbarism, was abolished.

Choiseul, so tardily converted to the Polish cause, strove to regain by his activity the time which he had suffered to be lost. Turkey, yielding to his entreaties, finally interfered diplomatically with some energy; but it was impossible to move Austria. The Emperor, Francis I., had died, August 18, 1764; and his successor, the youthful Joseph II., who had been elected King of the Romans, March 27, 1765, by the coöperation of Frederick II., was ill disposed towards the French alliance, and inclined to a reconciliation with Prussia. He did not possess the reality of power, which Maria Theresa held in her still firm and jealous hand, any more than his father had done; but the minister Kaunitz provided for the future by conciliating Joseph, and served as a medium between the son and the mother. Nothing could be obtained from Austria but a secret promise of neutrality between the Turks and the Russians, should Turkey succor Poland by arms.

Unhappy Poland had finally awakened under the excess of oppression. A man of bold and lofty spirit, Krasinski, the Bishop of Kamieniec (or Kamenetz), had organized a vast conspiracy against foreign tyranny. The outbreak was not to take place until the moment of the declaration of war by Turkey against Russia. It occurred prematurely. February 29, 1768, a simple gentleman, named Pulaski, gave the signal to the celebrated confederation of Bar. The Podolian nobility rose in insurrection, and their example was followed in the neighboring provinces. Unfortunately, the cause of the confederation was endangered from the first moment by the blending of the old national sentiments with that religious fanaticism which had been unknown to ancient Poland, and which did not compensate, by the enthusiasm with which it inspired the patriots, for the power of opinion which it lent to the enemies of Polish independence.

The confederates swore to defend the Catholic religion with their lives, "until it was thoroughly rooted and reëstablished in their country;"¹ that is, until it had regained exclusive sway, and bowed the Dissidents anew beneath its yoke. They wore the cross on their hearts, like the Crusaders of old: their device was *Jesus and Mary*; and the Crucifix and the Madonna were the insignia of their banners.

At the news of the insurrection, Bishop Krasinski had hastened to Versailles "to throw Poland into the arms of France." He promised Choiseul the fall of Poniatowski, and the acceptance of the King whom France should designate, and who should be rendered hereditary. Choiseul promised pecuniary assistance, and despatched a plenipotentiary to the confederates (May, 1768). The difficulties in the way of the confederates were prodigious: they had no fortresses or rallying-points, and scarcely any munitions of war; and, what was still worse, the hostile peasants served as spies for the Russians in the Russian provinces, where the peasantry were of the Greek faith. The Russian ambassador Repnin, the real Viceroy of Poland, had forced the Polish senate to solicit the Czarina's assistance against the *rebels*; and, force or perfidy alike suiting his purpose, had caused the confederates to be surprised during the parleys. The French agent, Taulès, found their principal body in a pitiable condition, driven back, temporarily, upon Ottoman territory by the Russians. Taulès, seeing nought that resembled an army, and understanding nothing of a war of this kind, concluded that all was lost, gave them no money, and returned.

At that very moment, however, the partisan warfare was spreading like a conflagration. The Russians, seriously alarmed, had recourse to execrable means. They called in the Zaporogue (or Zaporove) Cossacks, that republic of brigands, intrenched for centuries in the islets and rocks of the Dnieper. The Zaporogues rushed down like a pack of maddened wolves, carrying with them the *Greek* peasants of the Ukraine and Podolia, who were animated by an inveterate hatred of the Catholic nobles, their masters. Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, men, women, and children, were exterminated throughout Polish Ukraine. Sixteen thousand persons were slaughtered in the town of Ooman alone. More than fifty thousand in all were slain. The confederates of Bar, and the Catholic peasants of Great Poland, avenged them-

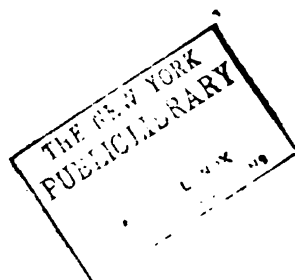
¹ Saint-Priest, *Partage de la Pologne*, § 3.

selves on the Dissidents, the auxiliaries of the Russians. Poland became a scene of universal horror.

Catharine again found means of evading the responsibility of the crimes of her hired assassins in the sight of Europe, and of washing out blood with blood. She sacrificed the wretches whom she had incited to insurrection, and delivered up multitudes of the Ukraine peasants to the tribunals of the republic of Poland. Gallows were erected by thousands for the murderers, amidst the bloody ruins heaped with the corpses of the victims. The Zaporogue confederation, so formidable to friends and foes, was, in the end, dissolved by the Russians.

A violation of Ottoman territory, committed by the Russians while in pursuit of a Polish party, at last caused the Porte to resolve on the armed intervention which had been instigated by Choiseul. The Sultan Mustapha declared war on the Czarina, after a last summons to evacuate Poland (September, 1768). Choiseul relied much on the Khan of Little Tartary, Crim Gherai, a partially Gallicized Mussulman, who had caused Molière to be translated, and who had been one of the first to introduce European ideas into Islamism. The Khan, the vassal of Turkey, fell upon New Servia, and carried off thirty-five thousand Greek, French, and German colonists, whom Catharine had attracted and settled by dint of promises between the Dniester and the Dnieper. He was about to push his enterprises farther, when he died, very opportunely for Russia, and with exceedingly suspicious symptoms. This sudden death disorganized the Tartars of the Black Sea, and deprived the Ottoman armies of an intelligent and courageous guide. Catharine had time to reflect. She dismissed the deputies convened for the preparation of the famous *Code*, and thought only of war. A bank was established, the notes of which were made a legal tender, for the purpose of drawing all the specie of the empire into the hands of the Russian government. Frederick II. began to pay the Czarina an annual subsidy of three millions, notified the Swedes that he should take sides against them if they allied themselves with the Turks, and counselled Catharine concerning the plan of the campaign.

In the spring of 1769, the Russians assumed the offensive, and entered Bessarabia. Their first attack on the fortified town of Chotyn was repulsed. They returned to the charge, and encountered the prodigious masses led by the grand vizier. Firm and patient, but few in numbers, and badly commanded, they were on the point of destruction from the errors of their leaders, when





Bosselin sc.

DUMOURIEZ.

Publié par Fourné à Paris.

Paris chez les Citoyens de la Liberté.

they were saved by the frightful lack of discipline of the Ottoman army. This army, which had hemmed in the Russians, and reduced them to the last extremity, was suddenly seized with a panic, and dispersed (September, 1769). Moldavia and Wallachia were wholly abandoned to the astonished conquerors.

The confederates of Bar were not discouraged. Although a prey to the intestine dissensions which were the eternal scourge of Poland, they had taken advantage of the formidable diversion of the Turks to extend the war to Lithuania. The indignation aroused by the atrocities of the Russian leaders, the Drewitzes and Suwarrows, those tigers with human faces, swelled the ranks of the patriots. Delegates from one hundred and seventy-nine districts of Poland and Lithuania assembled in November, 1769, at Biala, on the frontier of Austrian Silesia, and resolved to make a last effort to expel the foreigners. The agents of the confederation were commissioned to consult the political philosophers of France on the constitution to be given to Poland, once freed; a proof of the marvellous power of the spirit of the age. The insurrection, commenced in the name of the *Holy Father at Rome*, ended at Rousseau. Philosophy was thenceforth divided between the Russo-Prussian and the Polish causes. Catharine had won Voltaire and Diderot: the Poles invoked Rousseau and Mably, who had never shared the illusions of Ferney and the *Encyclopædia* concerning the *Semiramis* of the North.

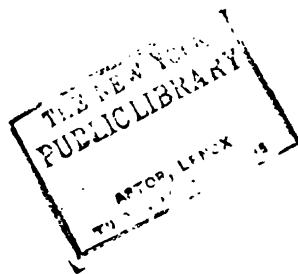
The attitude of King Stanislaus Augustus, the Czartoriskis, and the Senate, was significant. Despite the threats of Catharine, the Czartoriski party had maintained the official neutrality of the Polish government between Russia and Turkey, and the troops of the crown had ceased to second the Russians against the confederates. A compromise between the two Polish parties was possible and desirable.¹ Unhappily, neither the confederates nor their protector Choiseul understood this. Choiseul sent artillerymen, engineers, and money, with an officer who had signalized himself in Corsica, Colonel Dumouriez, afterwards so celebrated (July, 1770); but this agent, for the interest of the House of Saxony, opposed those of the Polish leaders who desired the fusion of the parties, and contributed to induce the confederation to

¹ "You ought," wrote Rousseau, a little later, "either to cut off the head of the King that has been given you by foreigners, or without regard to his first election, which is altogether void, to elect him anew;" that is, either to crush out by a terrible example the inveterate crime of appealing to foreign powers, or unreservedly to accept the repentance of the crowned culprit.

decree the dethronement of Poniatowski. Dumouriez served the Poles better in battle than in council. At the close of 1770, the confederation, with the Carpathians in its rear, the masters of a few places partially fortified, and victorious in various engagements, was in a better military condition than it had yet been found.

This was a deceitful success, which was only to accelerate the catastrophe. During the interval, the events which transpired in the heart of the Ottoman empire overthrew the hopes of Choiseul and the confederates. Prophecies, already ancient, were rife among the Greeks, of a *fair-haired nation* that was destined to drive the Turks from Europe. This tradition, and the conformity of religion, had long since turned the eyes of the Greeks and the Slaves, the subjects of Turkey, towards Russia. The German Münich, the most intelligent man that had governed or served Russia since Peter the Great, had been the first to attempt to take advantage of the Greco-Slavic sympathies. Catharine had resumed this idea, and applied it on a large scale. She had instigated a great conspiracy against the Ottoman empire, the principal centres of which were Montenegro and the Morea. The insurrection in Montenegro broke out prematurely, and was repressed; but the agitation continued in Greece. In the autumn of 1769, twelve Russian ships of the line crossed the Sound, and touched at the English ports, where British officers and sailors installed themselves on board to instruct the ignorant Russian mariners. England sacrificed her essential political interests to the commercial interests of the moment (she had obtained the renewal of a commercial treaty with Russia), and to the pleasure of thwarting France. The squadron from the Gulf of Finland entered the Mediterranean in November, 1769. France and Spain did not attack the Russians, for fear that England would support the latter. They were not ready for maritime war; and, above all, Louis XV. dreaded it, although it was desired by Choiseul. Public opinion, moreover, did not favor war on this occasion. Catharine II. caused the deliverance of Greece, of the country of Sophocles and Leonidas, to be celebrated in advance by all the trumpets of renown; and the aged Voltaire wept for joy at the thought that Athens would be free.

Catharine had desired to embrace the whole Ottoman empire in a quadruple attack by land and sea, and to overthrow it at a single blow. The Russian forces did not correspond to this gigantic plan. At the appearance of the first Russian vessels, the





SMYRNA
in Turkish Asia.

Philadelphia N. Am. Bibl. Inst.

mountaineers of the Morea, already called the *Lacedemonians* at Ferney, rose in insurrection, drawing in with them some of the Moreot nations, and Missolonghi, that spot of mournful and glorious destinies. The Russians, however, had scarcely any land forces, and were unable to defend their allies against the torrent of Albanians that the Porte precipitated upon the rebellious country. The insurrection was stifled in rivers of blood. Both Russians and Greeks had been reciprocally deceived concerning their respective forces. It cost the unhappy Greeks dear. As to the Russians, they consoled themselves by a great naval victory. July 5, 1770, their fleet destroyed that of the capitan-pacha in the Gulf of Tchesme, between Scio and the coast of Smyrna. They might have struck a more decisive blow. The Englishman Elphinstone, the real author of their victory, attempted to force the passage of the Dardanelles, which was not defended, and to set sail directly for Constantinople. The Russian commander, Alexis Orloff, the murderer of Peter III., refused to advance until the arrival of reinforcements. This delay saved the capital of the Turkish empire. The Hungarian, Tott, the agent of Choiseul, organized the Ottoman artillery, and put the Dardanelles in a defensive posture.

Of the three other attacks prescribed by Catharine, two failed, — the Georgian expedition, and the maritime armament fitted out in the Don; but the third was successful. While an army corps confronted the Turks on the Danube, another corps fell back on Tartar Moldavia, or Bessarabia. July 30, 1770, the Ottoman army, which was marching to the assistance of Bessarabia, was routed after a bloody battle on the Kagool, between the Danube and the Dniester. The Tartars that dwelt between the Danube and the Dneiper submitted, and the greater part were transported to the Ukraine to make room for Russian colonists on the shores of the Black Sea. September 26, Bender, the stronghold of Bessarabia, was carried by storm after an heroic defence. At the end of the season, the Turks abandoned Ismail, which commanded the mouths of the Danube, and all on the north of that river.

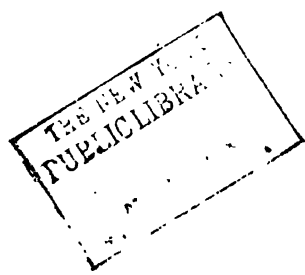
The reaction of the disasters of the Ottoman empire was destined to be fatal to the Poles and to Choiseul, and very favorable to the projects cherished by Frederick. As soon as he saw Russia engaged in war against the Turks, the King of Prussia had insinuated to Catharine, that, in order to deter Austria from opposing the progress of the Russian arms in Turkey, it would be well to agree upon the partition of certain of the Polish provinces

between Russia, Austria, and Prussia.¹ Catharine had paid no heed to this; but Frederick had prepared means to force her to listen. After adroitly conducted intrigues for the purpose of increasing the coolness between France and Austria, he had obtained an interview with the young Emperor, Joseph II., at Neisse in Silesia. The resentment of the court of Vienna against the conqueror of this fair province seemed wholly forgotten. It was agreed to remain neutral in the event of a rupture between France and England. The question of the dismemberment of Poland was broached. Joseph II., however, who was dependent upon his mother, had not the power to agree upon any thing. After this conference, Austria showed herself much more sympathetic towards the Poles, and invited the general council of the confederation to remove to Eperies in Hungary in order to be safe from the Russian troops. Joseph II. visited the Polish leaders there, and expressed much interest in them at the time when he was already planning the destruction of their country. These advances were a means of disquieting and influencing the Czarina. In July, 1770, Frederick went to Neustadt in Moravia to return the visit of Joseph II. This time, Joseph was accompanied by the minister Kaunitz, and, with him, the will of Maria Theresa. The news from Tchesme and Kagool was brought to Neustadt by a Turkish seraskier, who came to solicit the mediation of Frederick between the Sultan and the Czarina. Frederick offered to share this mediation with Austria. The two future mediators resolved to propose to Russia a compensation in Poland for the Turco-Danubian provinces, which Austria could not leave in the hands of Catharine, and agreed to take equal shares in order to maintain the balance of power.

Meanwhile, Austria, who had set to work to revive ancient claims on the *starosties* of her frontier, occupied the Polish district of Zips, locked within Hungary; and Frederick recommenced his atrocious exactions on the most extensive scale in Polish Prussia, whence he carried off every thing,—money and provisions, young men for his army, and young girls to marry to his Prussians, with dowries wrung from their parents.

Embarrassments and perils multiplied around Choiseul, who had taken the Ottoman empire for a support against Russia, and who felt this support escaping from his hand. He vainly sought to delude himself concerning the defection of Austria and her

¹ *Œuvres de Frédéric II.*, t. VI. p. 27, new edit. in 8vo. Berlin, 1846, 1847.





St. Peter's Basilica, Rome.
View from the nave looking towards the altar.

union with Prussia. The lying protests of Kaunitz did not deceive him : the quite recent marriage of the Dauphin to an archduchess (LOUIS XVI. and MARIE-ANTOINETTE, May 18, 1770), a marriage desired, and, so to speak, enforced, by Maria Theresa, had in no wise prevented the interview at Neustadt. France was drifting towards a double continental and maritime war, amidst a violent financial crisis. Doubtless it was still possible to prevent the national dismemberment of Poland ; for the Czarina, at this moment, continued to refuse it. By sacrificing to Catharine both the confederates of Bar and the reformers of the other party, the shadow of a republic, Poland by name, and Russia in fact, could still be maintained without a nominal change of territory. This was unimportant. Choiseul did not think of an arrangement with Catharine ; but he attempted to regain Austria. He caused the throne of Poland to be offered to Maria Theresa for the husband of one of her daughters, the Duke of Saxe-Teschen.¹ Austria refused. It was highly probable, therefore, that, in order truly to liberate Poland, it would be necessary to contend with Russia, Austria, and Prussia united. On the other hand, war with England was imminent. Spain was disputing the possession of the Falkland Isles with England ; the Spaniards had already had recourse to violence in these remote parts ; and the cabinet of Madrid was claiming assistance from France. The rumors of maritime war had already caused a reaction in the Archipelago. The Russian squadron was disorganized by the recall of the English sailors. England was concentrating her naval forces, and was also beginning to think that the Russians were progressing somewhat too rapidly in the East.

A general war did not take place. Choiseul, who had been for some time undermined by other intrigues, fell from power, December 24, 1770 ; and, with him, the last feeble chance of safety that remained to Poland.²

We have been forced to pass through much ignominy since the death of Louis the Great, but nothing comparable to that which paved the way for and followed the fall of Choiseul. France seemed sinking deeper and deeper into an infernal pit, not of flames, but of mire.

¹ The one who came with his wife to bombard Lille in 1792.

² Dumouriez had planned an extensive campaign for 1771. He designed to organize a regular army in Poland, and to make an incursion into Russia itself ; but the execution would have doubtless fallen far short of this daring conception. — See his *Mémoires*, t. I. ch. vii. and viii.

After the death of the Queen, Maria Leczinska (June 24, 1768),¹ Louis XV., at first considerably affected by this new warning, had not been long in throwing off the kind of relative decency which had reappeared at court during two or three years, and had plunged again into gross debauchery, with new frenzy, led on by the aged Richelieu, that eternal tempter. It is pretended that a sister of Choiseul, Madame de Grammont, a haughty, intelligent, and energetic woman, devoted to her brother (rumors of incest were current with respect to them), had unsuccessfully aspired to the inheritance of Madame de Pompadour, or rather of Madame de Châteauroux, whom she more resembled. The pride of the Choiseuls was not that which is inspired by virtue. Be this as it may, Louis fell into far different snares. In the autumn of 1768, the purveyor of the Parc-aux-Cerfs, the too celebrated valet de chambre Lebel, not knowing to what to have recourse in order to dispel the ennui of the palled monarch, ventured one day to bring him a woman kept by a *chevalier d'industrie*, named Du Barri, who made use of her prostituted charms to attract custom to a gaming-house. History is compelled to notice such turpitude: this creature was destined to reign over France! Jeanne Vaubernier inspired the sexagenarian debauchee with such intoxication, that he would never more separate from her. He installed her at Versailles; married her nominally to the elder brother of her former lover; caused her to be presented at court under the name of the Countess du Barri; and introduced her to his daughter, and afterwards to the young wife of his grandson! The drawing-rooms of Louis the Great were invaded by strange guests from the lowest haunts of Parisian debauchery. This depraved court, accustomed for half a century to every kind of scandal, recoiled, however, as if from contact with unclean beasts. The most sullied women refused to approach the strange favorite. The haughty Choiseul could not resign himself to conciliate such an influence: he rejected the advances of the *Countess*, and strove to make the King blush at *succeeding all France*. All was useless. When it was perceived that the old man was wholly and definitively subjugated, a portion of the court began to give way. A *Du Barri party* was formed: the enemies of Choiseul made overtures to this new power, and the Duke d'Aiguillon served as the medium of an at least indirect coalition between the pious cabal and the party of the brothels. The late Dauphin

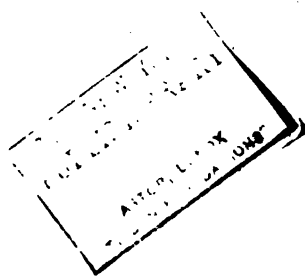
¹ Her father, the aged Stanislaus, had preceded her, February 23, 1766; and Lorraine had been definitively annexed to France.



Madame Du Barry.

From the painting by Jean Baptiste Greux in the collection of Alfred D. Rothschild, Esq.

From the Engraving.







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London, 1772

*Jac^s. Marie Terray (l'abbé Terray)
Contrôleur Général des Finances + 1778.*

Dessiné par J. B. de La Motte

was no longer present to impose on his friends respect for themselves and their cause.

New personages, meanwhile, had made their way into the ministry under the auspices of Choiseul; reserving to themselves the right to unite with his enemies, should it be to their profit. These were not docile or harmless mediocrities like their predecessors in the seals and the comptroller-generalship. Maupeou, appointed chancellor in 1768, and Terrai, called to the comptroller-generalship in December, 1769, by the recommendation of Maupeou, his former colleague in the parliament, were men fitted for bold and adventurous strokes, such as arise in stormy times; alike audacious, unscrupulous, and faithless: the one, the chancellor, in the guise, at first pliant, then arrogant, of a freedman of the Cæsars; the other, the comptroller, in the shameless guise of a satyr, the face and manners of which he possessed. The Abbé Terrai had been represented to the King and Choiseul as the only one capable of discovering, and, above all, of imperturbably carrying out, the extreme measures which had become necessary to prevent the immediate subversion of the finances. Terrai, indeed, possessed a clear and vigorous mind in conjunction with his immorality. Insane depravity had led the government to financial ruin: intelligent depravity was about to suspend this ruin for a moment. Terrai knew nothing of what was just and unjust; but he knew very well what was possible and impossible.

He saw, that, at the close of 1769, the expenditure exceeded the revenue sixty-three millions.¹ The exigible debt amounted to one hundred and ten millions; the anticipation of the future revenues surpassed one hundred and sixty-one millions; the revenues of the year 1770 with those of the first two months of 1771 had been forestalled; and the bankers and financiers refused to make new advances for 1770. The principal branches of the administration were about to be suspended for want of resources. In the presence of the opposition of the parliament and the decline of credit, it was impossible to have recourse to new taxes, loans, and advances. Some inheritors of the traditions of Law proposed a paper currency. Terrai did not believe in it. Since no willingness was manifested to enter upon great reforms, but two resources remained, — economy and the reduction of the debt, or partial bank-

¹ This is the estimate given by M. Mainon d'Invan. According to documents in possession of the Terrai Family, the real deficit would have amounted to seventy-six million seventy thousand four hundred francs. We are ignorant of the cause of this difference of estimates.

ruptcy. The kind of economy that could be proposed to such a government would be insufficient of itself alone; and the reduction of the debt, on its side, must have been carried to total bankruptcy; which seemed much too rash, even to Terrai. He formed his plan in conformity with the two resources united. He proposed the diminution of the expenses of the King's household and the various ministries, and commenced his operations on the debt.

January 7, 1770, he suspended the sinking-fund for eight years, and assigned its revenues (eighteen millions annually) to the redemption of the anticipations. January 18, he converted the tontines into simple life-*rentes* (a spoliation, the value of which he estimated at not less than one hundred and fifty millions, distributed through a considerable number of years); and, January 20, he reduced the arrears of a quantity of stocks, previously consolidated at five per cent, to four and two and a half per cent. January 29 and February 4, a new reduction was prescribed in the pensions, the effect of which was retroactive;¹ the profits of the farms, etc. February 18, the payment of rescripts on the general receipts, notes on the farms, and other stocks given to the financiers who had advanced funds to the treasury, amounting to at least two hundred millions, was indefinitely suspended. From four and a half to five per cent interest was assigned to these stocks, and a new sinking-fund was established for them. A loan of one hundred and sixty millions at four per cent on the Hôtel de Ville (the privileged class of *rentes*) was opened, payable, half in the stocks, the interest and arrears of which had been reduced January 20, and the other half in the rescripts suspended February 18. This was a new, indirect, and partial consolidation. At the same time, the legal interest on the constitutions of *rentes* was restored to five per cent in order to revive the circulation of specie. Violent measures, nevertheless, continued. By the side of a new loan of twenty-five millions on the receivers-general, a forced loan of twenty-eight millions was levied on the secretaries of the King and other royal officers (February). All redemptions to be effected by corporations, communes, etc., who had borrowed either for the King or for themselves, were suspended for four years, and the funds were diverted to the extinc-

¹ It was announced that the reduction would be proportional; and, in fact, the pensions of average amount were subjected to a reduction proportionally larger than that of the small ones; but the largest, those of the courtiers and the favorites, were spared. Falsehood was everywhere!—See Monthion, *Particularités sur les ministres des finances*, p. 168.

tion of the rescripts and assignments (February 25). The judicial deposits were speedily violated, and the specie was replaced by the uncurrent notes of the treasury. On the other hand, the taxes were, so to speak, squeezed and wrung in order to extort from them all that they could be made to yield. Terrai, after again providing for the current expenses of the administration, thus succeeded, during the year, in diminishing the expenditures thirty-six millions, and increasing the receipts fifteen millions; and announced to the King that a saving of ten millions would be sufficient to restore the balance between them.¹

The execution had been as energetic as the means had been dishonest. The greater part of these measures had been enacted under the form of decrees of the council: the least scandalous, presented to the parliament under the form of edicts and declarations, had been accepted by it with less difficulty than might have been expected. The parliament tolerated a bankruptcy represented as inevitable; the private interests of the magistrates were little affected by the spoliation of Terrai; their fortune consisting chiefly in lands and *rentes* on the Hôtel de Ville. This selfishness greatly lessened their moral energy. The court applauded the bold comptroller-general; but innumerable interests were trodden under foot, and ground down: law-suits, numerous bankruptcies, and suicides, increased the public discontent. The indignation, nevertheless, was not so great among the influential classes as it would be in the present state of society, wherein every thing reposes on respect for the pecuniary obligations of the State. Many employed their philosophy in consoling themselves, like Voltaire, for bankruptcy, by an epigram.

A great association, which had formerly had the whole fortune of France in its hands for a moment, consummated its ruin during the first year of Terrai's ministry. The Indian Company, the work of Colbert, revived with such brilliant promise by Law, and which had escaped the destruction of the *System*, had been, in general, more useful, indirectly, to foreign nations and the shipping of France, than profitable to its stockholders; but since the epoch when, conforming too much to a government as pusillanimous and more culpable than itself, it had rejected the power and incomparable greatness offered it by Dupleix, it had experienced disaster after disaster. After the recurrence of peace, an attempt was made to revive it. In 1764, the company ceded back to the King

¹ *Comptes rendus, etc., concernant les finances de France, depuis 1758 jusqu'en 1787; Lausanne, 1788, in quarto.*

the Isles of France and Bourbon, and the African factories; and the King restored to it the twelve thousand shares which belonged to the treasury, in consideration of some charges, and authorized it to administer its own affairs, without the interference of royal commissioners, and to make a call for funds on its stockholders. A Genevese banker, settled at Paris, who had honorably acquired a large fortune, and who was destined to play an important political part during the last years of the ancient régime and the first of the Revolution, M. Necker, had acquired the principal influence among the stockholders, and might have revived the commerce of the company by an enlightened and honest administration; but an intrigue plotted around the comptroller-general effected the withdrawal of the administrators elected, and the reëstablishment of the régime of commissioners (1768). The state of affairs seemed to justify the economists, who had long furiously assailed the monopoly of the company. Memorials for and against this monopoly were published in 1769 by M. Necker, and the Abbé Morellet, the representative of the sect of the economists. The ministry had decided on its course; for Morellet had been induced to write by the comptroller-general, D'Invaux himself. A decree of the council, August 13, 1769, by the advice of commercial deputies, declared all trade with the Indies free: the return voyages, however, were still to be made to Lorient; a restriction which greatly diminished the advantages of free trade (September 6).

The company, involved in debt, did not attempt to struggle against the competition of free trade. It made a surrender of its property to the hands of the King, who undertook to satisfy the creditors, and to convert the shares into *rentes* at five per cent (April 8, 1770). The comptroller-general, in addition to this cession, which amounted in value to one hundred millions, still found means of extorting from the stockholders, by increasing their *rentes*, a last payment of fifteen millions; while, in reality, the State was indebted to them twenty millions.¹

Thus ended the Indian Company of France; while the English East-India Company, its successful rival, was advancing with giant strides towards the conquest of all India, and was already in possession of the territories and revenues of a great empire. (It had, prior to 1772, besides the profits from commerce, a revenue of one hundred and twenty millions, of which the State claimed nearly fifty millions.) Other, more obscure operations agitated

¹ *Mém. de l'abbé Morellet*, t. I. ch. viii.; *Mercure hist.*, t. CLXVIII.; *Mém. de M. Necker pour la Compagnie des Indes*.

the people more than the ruin of the Indian Company, or even than the bankruptcy of the Abbé Terrai, — operations which were productive of much more terrible results. We shall speedily revert to the question of the cereals: it suffices at this moment to point out the striking contrast that existed between the ruin of so many private individuals, despoiled by the minister, and the distress of the people, caused by the dearness of grain, on the one hand, and, on the other, by the prodigious expenditure prescribed by the King for the journey and reception of the new Dauphiness. It is asserted, doubtless with exaggeration, that this expenditure exceeded twenty millions. Among the magnificence of these rejoicings, sinister presages seemed to announce the fate in reserve for the tragical union of Louis XVI. and Marie-Antoinette. The fireworks displayed by the city of Paris in honor of the royal couple, May 30, on that Place Louis Quinze which was one day to be the Place de la Révolution, ended in a panic, in which the immense multitude, for whom sufficient means of egress had not been provided, were crushed and stifled. Several hundred persons perished.

A few weeks after this unhappy event, the parliament of Paris, lately so complaisant with respect to the finances, violently renewed its strife with the court on another ground. La Chalotais, the parliament of Rennes, and the States of Brittany, had not ceased to demand justice on D'Aiguillon since the King had withdrawn him from this province. The ex-governor, besides the grievances relative to his administration, was accused of having suborned witnesses in the trial of La Chalotais: the suspicion was even hinted of an attempt to poison the captive attorney-general, — a thing much more improbable than the other charges. D'Aiguillon himself entreated the King to permit him to be judged by the parliament and the peers. The Court of Peers was convoked at Versailles, presided over by the King in person (April 4, 1770), in order, said the Chancellor Maupeou, "to purge the peerage of the crimes of a peer, or a peer of the crimes which are imputed to him." This solemn suit continued to proceed regularly for nearly three months, with numerous revolutions; when Louis XV. abruptly decided it by a bed of justice, June 27. The King, considering, he said, that the incidents of the proceedings tended to subject to the inspection of the tribunals the secrecy of his administration, the execution of his orders, and the personal use of his authority, and convinced that the conduct of the Duke d'Aiguillon and of *those* named in the judicial

inquiries (La Chalotais and others) was irreproachable, annulled the proceedings, the reciprocal complaints, etc., and imposed the most absolute silence on all concerned.

It was impossible to be more inconsistent, or more disdainful of all judicial forms. There had been nothing in the incidents of the suit that might not have been foreseen; but the chancellor was only seeking a pretext for a great quarrel with the parliament. The parliament, in fact, indignantly received this arbitrary interference of individual authority in the course of justice,—an interference, moreover, which had had numerous precedents, and had secured impunity to many criminals under less striking circumstances, and on less important occasions. The parliament, by a decree of July 2, declared, contrary to the letters-patent of June 27, that the judicial inquiries contained the bases of grave proofs of several offences compromising the honor of the Duke d'Aiguillon, and that the duke should therefore abstain from exercising any functions belonging to the peerage until he had purged himself therefrom by due process of law. This was throwing down the gauntlet before royal absolutism.

The council quashed the decree of the parliament. After fruitless remonstrances, the parliament decreed anew that the suit could not be reputed terminated by an arbitrary act of absolute authority (July 31). August 14, the parliament of Rennes ordered two memorials and opinions in favor of the Duke d'Aiguillon to be burned by the public executioner, and refused to register the letters-patent which quashed a resolution passed by it against the members of the *ex-parliament of D'Aiguillon*. The King ordered two counsellors to be imprisoned, and the decrees of the council to be registered by force at Rennes. The parliament of Rennes protested, and sent to the other courts the judicial inquiries which it had instituted against D'Aiguillon and his abettors. The other courts sided with the parliaments of Paris and Rennes. M. de Calonne, who, from attorney-general to the commission instituted for the trial of La Chalotais, had become intendant of Metz, saw himself refused a seat by the parliament of Metz until he had cleared himself from the charges brought against him in the documents transmitted by the parliament of Rennes. The Governor of Metz, by order of the King, caused the resolution against Calonne to be stricken from the registers. Similar storms broke out at Bordeaux, Toulouse, and Besançon. September 1, the council quashed a decree of the parliament of Bordeaux, in which it was pretended, said the decree of the coun-

cil, "that his Majesty holds from a constitutive law the power which he holds from God alone."

September 3, the chancellor conducted the King to the Palais in order to hold a new bed of justice for the express purpose of causing the documents of the suit of D'Aiguillon to be returned to him, and every thing concerning the affair to be stricken from the registers. The King served as his own exempt and bailiff! September 6, the parliament of Paris adopted a resolution by which it declared that "the multiplicity of the acts of absolute power exercised in all directions against the letter and spirit of the constitutive laws of the monarchy is an unequivocal proof of a premeditated plan to change the form of government, and to substitute for the equable force of laws the irregular concussions of arbitrary power." The continuance of the deliberation was postponed till December 3, after the vacation.

This vacation, which was to be the last, was employed by the chancellor in preparing the engines for war, the plan of which he had long revolved in his mind.

November 27, a royal edict, renewing the declaration of March 8, 1766, again proscribed the terms *unity* and *classes*, interdicted all correspondence between the parliaments, all suspension of service, and all resistance after the King had replied to the remonstrances of the courts, under the penalty of deprivation of office. The parliament replied by calling to mind the fact that royalty owed to it the humiliation of the great vassals, the maintenance of the independence of the crown in opposition to the schemes of the court of Rome, and the preservation of the sceptre, from male to male, to the first-born of the royal house: it recriminated with extreme virulence against the baleful counselors of the throne, and entreated the King to deliver up to the vengeance of the laws the disturbers of the State and the calumniators of the magistracy (December 3). December 7, the third bed of justice of the year was held. The King summoned the parliament to Versailles, and commanded it to register the edict of November 27, inveighing, meanwhile, against pretensions which would reduce the legislative power of the King to the simple proposition of the laws. The Duke d'Aiguillon went thither to take his seat among the peers, and arrogantly to brave his judges. December 10, the members of the parliament in a body offered the King the sacrifice of their condition and life, — a form of resignation. The King commanded them to resume their functions. They declared it impossible to obey until the withdrawal of the

edict. "It would seem," they wrote to the King, "as if nothing remained for your parliament to do but to perish with the laws, since it is the duty of the magistrates to follow the fate of the State" (December 13). The King sent letters of jussion. The parliament persisted in suspending the course of justice (December 19-20).

Situations apparently analogous had been witnessed more than once under this reign; but the question had never been entered into so thoroughly or in such terms. Every one felt that institutions were drifting to utter ruin. A grave event preceded the dénouement of the parliamentary struggle. Choiseul was no longer prime minister in fact, as he had been for a long time: Maupeou and Terrai had been withdrawing their ministry from his influence and undermining his policy for the past year. Choiseul desired peace within, and war without. Maupeou and Terrai desired the contrary; and both, secretly aspiring to the first place in the cabinet, acted in concert against the common enemy with Madame du Barri. Habit supported Choiseul with the King: the fear of war finally destroyed him. When Louis perceived how far his minister had involved him with Spain against England, he determined to sacrifice him. December 24, Choiseul received his dismissal by a harshly abrupt letter, which expressed the dissatisfaction of the King with his services, exiled him to his château at Chanteloup, and commanded him to retire thither within twenty-four hours.

A spectacle ensued such as had never before perhaps been seen, — the court faithful to disgrace! The greatest and most brilliant part of the court deserted Versailles to leave their names at Choiseul's door, then to escort the exile on the road to Chanteloup. The Duke de Chartres, the great-grandson of the Regent, forced his way into Choiseul's house to embrace the fallen minister. This was the first political act of the young prince who was destined to be *Philippe-Egalité*. The conduct of the court was a threatening symptom of the spirit of independence that was penetrating everywhere, at the very moment when royalty was preparing to seize with a faltering hand the most unlimited despotism. All the enlightened and lettered part of the nation testified the same sentiments as the court. It was felt that all of French honor that had remained to Versailles had departed with Choiseul.

The public mind was soon moved by new emotions. A month passed in letters of jussion, five times reiterated, summoning the parliament to resume the course of justice, and in incidents rela-

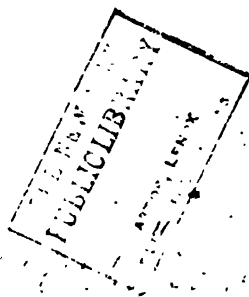


HIS SERENE HIGHNESS THE
DUKE de CHARTRES.

Published July 1783, by L. Fickling, Stationer, near the

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tive to the resistance of the magistrates. The King hesitated to strike the decisive blow. Madame du Barri succeeded where Maupeou would doubtless have failed. Well trained by the chancellor, she caused Vandyke's portrait of Charles I. to be placed in her apartment; and, showing it to Louis XV., "*France!*" said she (she gave the King of France the names of lackeys in farces),—" *France!* your parliament will also cut off your head!"

The parliament of Paris was not made for such terrible measures! It did not even think of placing itself under the protection of a sedition, as in the Fronde, and had not the least idea of *material* resistance.

During the night of January 19-20, 1771, all the members of the parliament were awakened by musketeers, who summoned them in the King's name to sign a declaration as to whether they would or would not resume their functions. The greater part signed in the negative. On the following night, the authors of the negative signatures, numbering more than one hundred and twenty, were enjoined, by *lettres de cachet*, to repair to different places of exile, with the notification of a decree of the council confiscating their places. The thirty-five or forty magistrates who had signed in the affirmative retracted, January 21. The public greeted them with loud acclamations on their departure from the Palais. They set out in turn for exile.

The members of the council of State were provisionally commissioned to render justice at the Palais (January 23), and were installed with great military parade amidst the hootings of the populace. The chief registrar, Gilbert des Voisins, sacrificed a post with a revenue of one hundred thousand francs, and suffered himself to be exiled, to keep his faith with the parliament: the other registrars yielded only before threats of imprisonment for themselves, and a declaration of the ineligibility of their children to any office. Despite similar menaces, the attorneys eluded the order to exercise their functions. It is needless to say that the advocates abstained from exercising theirs. The hussars themselves revealed their repulsion to the *counterfeit parliament*. The chancellor pursued his work, without caring for the passionate protests despatched by the provincial parliaments, the courts of aids, the chambers of accounts, the court of coinage, the Châtelet, and the whole magistracy. February 22, an edict began at last to reveal Maupeou's ideas. The preamble expressed itself in a language which the philosophers would not have disowned concerning the necessity of reforming the abuses of the courts; condemned the

vendibility of office "introduced by the misfortune of the times," which "often excluded from the magistracy those which were most worthy of it;" and acknowledged that the King owed his subjects prompt and gratuitous justice, and that the excessive extent of the jurisdiction of the parliament of Paris was infinitely injurious to those amenable to it, who were obliged to abandon their families to go thither to solicit a justice rendered slow and ruinous by the length and multiplicity of the proceedings. In consequence, the King established in the towns of Arras, Blois, Châlons, Clermont-Ferrand, Lyons, and Poitiers, six *superior councils*, having cognizance in the last resort of all civil and criminal matters, with a few exceptions (in matters pertaining to the peerage, for instance), each in a certain number of bailiwicks. The members of these councils were to receive no term-fees, judges' fees, or other perquisites, over and above their salaries.

The ability of Maupeou's plan cannot be denied: to shelter despotism beneath the mask of progress, to assume the part of Frederick and Catharine, was something wholly new to Louis XV.

April 9, in consequence of an affront offered in a procession, by the chamber of accounts and the court of aids, to the *counterfeit parliament*, an edict abolished the court of aids, which had rendered itself obnoxious by its eloquent and continued remonstrances, dismembered its jurisdiction between the parliament of Paris and the new superior councils, and prescribed the redemption of its places. The principal members of the court were exiled from Paris. April 13, the King held a bed of justice, in which were registered, with the edict that abolished the court of aids, two other edicts, the first of which abolished all the former parliamentary offices, which were to be redeemed (the confiscation announced was retracted), and replaced them by seventy-five gratuitous posts, which were to be neither vendible nor hereditary,¹ and the holders of which were forbidden to receive judges' fees: the second edict abolished the great council, that parasitical tribunal, without fixed jurisdiction or attributes, which had had so many contests with the parliament. The members of the great council formed the new parliament, with a few ex-members of the court of aids and some obscure advocates, recommended by the Archbishop of Paris, or by other enemies of the old magistracy.²

¹ The new parliament was to present candidates to the King for the offices that should fall vacant.

² The first president of the *Maupeou parliament* was the intendant of Paris, Berthier de Sauvigni, whose son was destined to meet a tragic end in 1789, with his father-in-

The King, after forbidding all intercession in favor of the fallen parliament, retired, saying, with borrowed energy, "I shall never change!"

It was thus that the parliament of Paris went to rejoin its great enemy, the Society of Jesus. All the great bodies, all the fundamental elements of the past, were destroyed one after another by royalty, which remained alone suspended over the brink of ruin, in its apparent full power and its real weakness. The impression was deep and wide-spread, without being unanimous. Voltaire and a few of the encyclopedists, who had lately deplored with the public the ruin of Choiseul, hesitated, wavered, and finally applauded Maupeou reforming abuses, and expelling the judges of La Barre and Lally. But public opinion, for the first time, was not with Voltaire, but with Mabli, on this question. The words "liberty," "right," and "legality," from the midst of the judicial bodies, had deeply moved it. It despised the ministers too much to give them credit for their reforms.¹ The spirit of opposition made it forget at this moment the retrogressive tendencies, the faults, and even the crimes, of the parliaments, to remember only their long services in opposition to feudalism and ultramontanism, and the tie which had connected these great bodies for so many centuries with the destinies of the French nationality. Opposition was everywhere, around the throne, and on its very steps. The advocate-general, Séguier, had openly told the King, in the bed of justice, "that the inverting of the laws had more than once been the cause or pretext for revolutions in the greatest monarchies." Of twenty-nine peers present, eleven had given their opinion against the registration of the edicts; and, which seemed more serious, all the princes of the blood, except the Count de La Marche, the son of the Prince de Conti, had refrained from appearing at the bed of justice, and had addressed to the King a warm protest, in which they argued the illegality of all that had been done since the preceding November, maintained that the inviolability of the magistrates was numbered among the fundamental laws of the monarchy, and explicitly denied to the King

law Foulon, the intendant of finance under Terrai. — See *Journal historique de la révolution opérée dans la constitution de la monarchie française, par M. de Maupeou*; 7 volumes.

¹ A regulation, issued May 17, simplified legal proceedings by applying the form of procedure of the council of State to the new tribunals, with the necessary modifications.

the right of enacting such a law as that of November 27.¹ The King exiled the princes to their estates.

The public prosecutor and his officers had resigned their posts, and ten of the ex-members of the great council had refused to sit in the *Maupeou parliament*. The greater part of the bailiwicks and presidials refused to recognize the new magistracy. The Châtelet of Paris, the first of the inferior tribunals, suffered itself to be crushed rather than yield (May 27). Among the magistrates of the Châtelet, sent into exile, is observed the name of D'Éspréménail, advocate of the King. The provincial parliaments loudly defied the destroyers of the Parisian magistracy, who were about to destroy them in turn. The parliament of Rouen, among others, had declared the magistrates, advocates, etc., "who were interfering with the functions of the parliament of Paris," *illegally chosen and perjured* (April 15), and had entreated the King to convoke the States-General. There were no material disturbances: the streets were tranquil; but the public mind was in a state of fermentation. *News by private hand* braved the police, and circulated the details of the turpitude of Versailles everywhere; and terrible placards, the work, not of factions or conspiracies, which did not yet exist, but of individual anger, appeared from time to time in the public squares. The following words were one day read at the foot of the statue of Louis XV.: *Decree of the court of coinage, prescribing that a Louis badly struck shall be struck anew.*

The ministry pursued its work. All the judicial courts that resisted were crushed, — the *table de marbre*, which judged in the last resort whatever concerned the waters and forests, the bureau of finance, the general bench of the admiralty, etc.

From August to November, 1771, all the provincial parliaments, and several chambers of accounts, courts of aids, etc., were dissolved, and reorganized on the new footing. Not only the upper bourgeoisie, but also the nobility, the usual adversaries of the members of the bar, showed themselves, in general, sympathetic towards the misfortunes of the magistracy, either because they were carried away by the general sentiment of hostility to the circle of the King, or because they foresaw, in the fall of so ancient and so important an institution, the imminent peril of all the

¹ The protest was signed by the Duke of Orleans, his son the Duke de Chartres, the Prince de Condé, his son the Duke de Bourbon, the Count de Clermont, and the Prince de Conti. The King called the last *my cousin, the advocate*, on account of his parliamentary relations and opinions.

ancient régime. Two provincial governors resigned their posts rather than aid in the destruction of the parliaments of Toulouse and Rouen. The higher clergy alone short-sightedly rejoiced at the blow which avenged the Jesuits.

The Abbé Terrai's hands were free, since he had no longer to fear a refusal of registration. The economy which he had solicited not having been effected, he raised the imposts, villain-taxes, twentieths, salt-taxes,¹ and gratuities, and rendered justice much more costly than it had been when it was not *gratuitous*, by enormously increasing the duties on records, registers, etc. He created new taxes and a multitude of petty posts, abolished other offices, and subverted the municipal ordinances of 1764, establishing the vendibility with respect to municipal posts which had just been abolished with respect to the courts of law. Like a true financier of the Middle Ages, he doubled, in behalf of the treasury, not only the tolls which belonged to the King, but those also which belonged to the nobles. He revoked all the alienations of the domains and of various duties, some without any reimbursements to the alienees, others by ordering the treasury to pay a trifling annuity on them. He caused all offices to be arbitrarily valued, and taxed the holders one per cent a year on the capital, besides the deductions which were made from all salaries and annuities; ² abolished all the exemptions from duties, aids, salt-taxes, import and export duties, and franc-fiefs, without any indemnity to the towns and private individuals who had purchased them; procured fifty millions by the issue of life-*rentes* at ten per cent; and succeeded, by innumerable financial operations, in increasing the receipts thirty-four millions, and redeeming a great part of the paper, the payment of which had been suspended, so as to set up the financiers anew, of whom he was in need. He boasted of having secured a balance of five millions in favor of the receipts for 1773; but it is certain, that, in his own estimate for 1774, the deficit, which he partially admits, is found to amount to more than forty millions (he admits it to be more than twenty-seven millions). He had demanded economy of the court: it had answered by a new increase of expenditure.³

¹ At the time of the overthrow of the parliaments, the administration had prepared a plan for the equalization of the tax on salt. Terrai renounced it, and simply increased the salt-tax one-fifth.

² Terrai fixed this deduction at one-tenth on life-*rentes* and salaries, one-fifth on interest on security and the profits of the farmers-general, and one-fifteenth on perpetual *rentes*.

³ Seven million from the civil household of the King and the appanage of the Count d'Artois, etc.

It may well be supposed that true order was incompatible with such immorality. Terrai had already diverted to other uses a part of his new sinking-fund, after having destroyed the old one. He had renewed the lease of the general farms at one hundred and thirty-five millions. The agreements made, he informed the farmers that their places were encumbered with *croupes* (preferred shares), and pensions amounting to two millions. The farmers protested: he threatened not to return to them the funds already advanced. They were forced to dispense with the two millions. This incident, among a hundred others, indicates the true character of this cut-throat ministry.

Terrai purchased by all imaginable exactions and malversations the support of the *Du Barri party*. Madame de Pompadour at least had had an individuality and a will; but the Du Barri's name was legion: there were no bounds to the avidity of the swarm of harpies that surrounded this easy and fantastic courtesan. A last shadow of control remained to the chamber of accounts, the only one of the great courts which had been spared, and which had abandoned or tamely supported the common cause of the magistracy. The chamber of accounts endeavored to raise itself in public opinion by remonstrances against the financial abuses. Terrai rid himself of this weak obstacle: he took away from the chamber of accounts the cognizance of the validity of the documents which authenticated the disbursements made in the King's name by the keepers of the treasury, the general treasurers of the clergy, and those of the *pays d'États*, then the cognizance of the accounts of the receivers of the villain-taxes (May, 1772). All accountability was thus swallowed up in the obscure gulf of the *royal orders on the treasury*.¹

This absolute despotism which enveloped France is appalling, considered at a distance: near by, it was almost as ridiculous as detestable. All opposition manifested in acts was punished by *lettres de cachet*; but these *lettres de cachet*, which imprisoned, or despatched from one end of the kingdom to the other, a multitude of notable persons snatched from their families and business, were revoked as lightly as they were issued. The comptroller-general was the first to laugh at the witticisms that were current concerning his depredations: he was willing to be accused of being a plunderer so long as he was not reproached with being a

¹ Concerning the exactions of Terrai, see Bailli, *Hist. financière de la France*, t. II. pp. 184-188; and the *Mémoires concernant l'administration des finances sous Terrai*; London, 1776, *passim*.

fool.¹ This feeble and vinous despotism lacked earnestness and nerve to become true tyranny, — not that Maupeou and Terrai were wanting in personal energy; but, above and beneath them, all was flagging, and becoming enfeebled in victory itself. The opposite side was also flagging. The members of the parliaments of Grenoble and Dijon had requested to return to the new organization. A great part of the members of the parliament of Douai, and minorities of from one-fourth to one-third of those of the parliaments of Besançon, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Rennes, and Metz, made the same submission. The parliaments of Paris and Rouen remained unanimous in abstaining from the exercise of their functions; but a part of their members finally consented to accept the redemption of their places, which, in some sort, recognized the lawfulness of the new régime. The majority of the advocates at Paris decided to be sworn at the reopening of the November term, 1771.² The Provincial Estates, even in Brittany, gave way before a threat of dissolution. A great number of Norman gentlemen, who had signed a protest against the violation of the ancient Norman charter, threatened with exile or imprisonment, retracted individually.

The Condés, then the Orleans, weary of living at a distance from court, and whose interests were injured by the fiscal measures, entreated to be taken again into favor. They were far different from the princes of the League and even of the Fronde! Conti alone sustained his part to the end (Clermont had died in June, 1771). These numerous defections did not render the attitude of the public less hostile. Paris was sullen. Brittany above all was so gloomy, that it seemed as if something terrible must speedily grow out of its silence and impassibility. Pamphlets, eagerly welcomed, multiplied against the King. It was evident, that, though every thing was suspended, nothing was ended.

However great might have been the agitation caused by the fall of Choiseul and the parliaments, this excitement affected little beyond the upper strata of society; but sullen murmurs, far more threatening, and provoked by a different cause, were

¹ A plunderer in behalf of the King: his large private fortune, and the enormous direct or tolerated profits of his ministry, give us reason to believe that he did not pilage on his own account.

² The office of parliamentary attorney had been abolished, and a hundred offices of advocates, performing the functions of attorneys, had been created, the purchasers of which were exempted from the necessity of holding university degrees.

rising from the masses of the people. Maupeou had no part in these ; but Terrai was deeply involved in them, and, with him, the King in person !

We must go back a little way in order to take up the formidable question of the cereals.

The edict of 1764, in favor of the free exportation, so ardently desired by the economists and the greater part of the parliaments, had at first borne good fruits. The abundant harvests, which perhaps had saved France in the last part of the Seven-Years' War, had been repeated in 1765 and 1766 ; and the interest of the producers and the consumers had been reconciled by an average price : but, from 1767, the state of affairs became very different. Bad harvests produced dearth. The people laid the blame on the exportation, which had not, however, exceeded the annual value of fifteen million francs in 1765 and 1766, and had since diminished,¹ — a quantity very trifling in proportion to the consumption of France ; while the dearth far surpassed any deficit that could have been caused by the exportation, which, moreover, save in rare instances,² ceased of itself as soon as the grain rose in price. Serious disturbances agitated Normandy in the beginning of 1768, and the people clamored against the monopolizers. The cry of famine often accuses men where it should only accuse things : this time, however, the people were not wholly in the wrong. As early as May 5, 1768, the parliament of Rouen entreated the King to suspend that freedom of exportation which it had lately entreated with such urgency.³ The parliament was not listened to. Numerous agents having bought the grain in the granary, although the edicts interdicting its sale elsewhere than in the markets had not been revoked, manœuvred to prevent the farmers from sending their grain to the markets, and caused quantities of grain to be sent out of Normandy ; while the ministerial power forbade the chamber of commerce of Rouen to counterbalance these operations by purchasing grain outside the province. The parliament of Rouen had begun to prosecute the monopolizers. An express order from the King arrested the prosecution. The parliament of Rouen gave vent to its indignation in a letter to the King full of the boldest accusations. "The most

¹ *Mémoires de Choiseul*, t. I. p. 73.

² For instance, when grain, dear at home, was still dearer abroad.

³ Meanwhile, the parliament of Dauphiny, a province which the dearth had not yet reached, on the contrary, solicited of the King indefinite freedom of the grain-trade, without limits or duties, and boasted of the progress which had been made in agriculture since the edict of 1764 (April, 1768).

considerable purchases of grain have been made at the same time, by the same parties, in the different European markets. It would be impossible for private individuals to carry on such immense enterprises. There is but one society, the members of which are powerful in credit, that would be capable of such an undertaking: we recognize therein the handiwork of the ruling power, the footprints of authority. . . . The trading speculators have not acted rashly: the purchases of grain in the granary have been made, under the shadow of authority, by men who brave all prohibitions. We have the proof of this in our hands. . . . The prohibition to prosecute manifests the existence of criminals, the fear that they may be discovered, and the desire to screen them from punishment. *This prohibition from the throne transforms our doubts into certainty!*" (October 29, 1768.)

The minister of the King's household, Bertin, the confidential agent of all the private business of Louis XV., replied to the parliament of Rouen, that "its reflections were only conjectures, and conjectures little in conformity with the respect due the King; and that the parliament had received them without proofs, and had not inquired into the facts!" The parliament of Rouen addressed its reply to the King himself. "When we affirmed that this monopoly existed, and that it was protected, God forbid, sire, that we should have had your Majesty in view, but perchance some of those among whom you distribute your authority."

The successor of Louis the Great had come to the point of defending himself, and defending himself badly, against the charge of being a grain monopolizer! . . . This inconceivable dialogue positively attests the existence of what has been styled the PACT OF FAMINE.¹

What was the Pact of Famine, that bloody spectre so often evoked, like the demon of vengeance, in the most funereal days of the Revolution?

We will not go back to the inhuman speculations which had taken place in former times, and to which allusion is made in divers passages of Saint-Simon, and even in a sermon of Massillon; neither will we investigate the abuses to which the *leases of the King's grain*, that is, the contracts made with the government for the supply of the capital and the armies about 1729 and 1740, had given rise. The celebrated Malisset Company, organized

¹ We have taken these important details from the extended work of M. Floquet, so full of useful and curious documents, — *Hist. du parlement de Normandie*, t. VII. pp. 421-432.

from 1765 to 1767, is alone in question here. It is probable that the first idea of the administration, that is, of the Comptroller-General Laverdi, Trudaine de Montigni (the son of the friend of Gournai), and other intendants of finance, was only, while securing the provisioning of Paris, to establish a certain standard in the price of grain by the operations of an association which would buy grain in good years, and store it, in order to sell it again in bad ones. The end was not only allowable, but praiseworthy. This was doubtless what Louis XV. did not fail to say when he interested himself in behalf of his privy purse in the affairs of the association.¹ He colored his base cupidity in his own eyes by persuading himself that he was rendering a service to agriculture. The end was praiseworthy, we say. The means was dangerous. It would have been dangerous even in a time of liberty and publicity. At an epoch when the most oppressive and most iniquitous speculations had become a habit with the revenue-farmers; when the ministry screened the financial operations, and facilitated every kind of abuse; when the men in power had *lettres de cachet* at their disposal to punish indiscretions and repress complaints,—an association supported by the government could be little else than an engine of monopoly for the purpose of stifling that competition in the grain-trade demanded by the economists. It was necessary to disguise the hand of the government, and to disguise the very existence of the association. Men concealed their action on account of prejudices. These prejudices were justified. The association was scarcely organized when criminal manœuvres were commenced to exaggerate the rise. An ex-secretary of the order of the clergy, Le Prévost de Beaumont, having become acquainted with the constitutive agreement of the Malisset Company, made it his duty to communicate it to the parliament of Rouen, which had substantiated the results without being able to trace the cause. The documents were seized before reaching the parliament of Rouen, and Le Prévost *disappeared*! He was discovered twenty-two years after in the depths of a State-prison! The 14th of July was needed to restore him to liberty.

The administration, at first rather a dupe than an accomplice,

¹ This purse was administered by Bertin. Before speculating in grain, Louis had speculated largely in the public stocks. He always held all kinds of paper; and, when any edict discrediting such or such a kind was prepared in the council, he did not sign it until he had anticipated the decline by ridding himself of the threatened stock; that is, he played a *sûre game*. — *Vie privée de Louis XV.*, t. IV. p. 152.

became alarmed on seeing dearness become dearth. Assistance was despatched to Normandy: premiums were offered for the importation of grain, and the ships importing it were exempted from freight duties (October 31, 1768). The parliament of Paris, meanwhile, became restless in turn. A general assembly of police of the city of Paris, convoked by the parliament, and composed of deputies from all the courts and communes, decreed that the parliament should be requested to entreat the King to retract the declarations of 1763 and 1764, to permit no more grain to be purchased outside of the markets, to compel those who had store-houses to send their grain to market, and to suspend exportation for a year (November 28, 1768). The parliament rendered a corresponding decree, which was quashed by the council. The ministry wished to maintain the principles of commercial freedom.¹

The anti-economist revolution, meanwhile, broke forth with an impetuosity wholly national. It had passed from the people to the parliaments: it reached the philosophers themselves, to a certain point, precisely at the moment when the economists were obtaining the most flattering successes abroad among the foreign disciples of French philosophy.² The hierophantic tone affected by the principal disciples of Quesnai, their pretensions to infallibility, the *evidence* imputed by them to certain very questionable principles, and the too often obscure, pedantic, and diffuse form of their aphorisms (Turgot always excepted), had shocked the writers of the *Encyclopædia*, and, before them, the patriarch of Ferney. Voltaire had satirized the economists, although without bitterness, in his *Man with Forty Crowns*, and elsewhere; and was the commander-in-chief of that rising in arms in favor of the traditions of Colbert, in which the unfortunate champion of the Indian Company, the banker Necker, distinguished himself.³ Rousseau

¹ Among the measures dictated by principles of sound economy must be cited the abolition of the right of common pasturage in Champagne (March, 1769).

² In 1769, a chair of *public economy* was founded at Milan for Beccaria, under the auspices of Count Firmian, the Governor of Milanais. A similar chair was established at Naples by the minister Tanucci.

³ Necker won the prize, in 1773, offered by the Academy of Dijon for a Eulogy of Colbert. The article *Population*, in Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary*, is worthy of mention in this discussion against the economists. In this, Voltaire admirably refutes Montesquieu and the economists concerning the pretended depopulation of modern Europe; and, which is still more remarkable, refutes Malthus in advance: "We do not progress in a geometrical proportion. All the calculations that have been based on this pretended multiplication are absurd chimeras. Nature has provided means for preserving and restricting the species." The species, yes; but greatly at the expense of individuals. The question is obscure, and full of anxiety to

abstained from the strife, despite the efforts of the Marquis de Mirabeau to draw him into the camp of the economists. Rousseau asked nothing but peace and silence: *rational despotism*, moreover, was not calculated to attract him. The patriot Forbonnais, without being the enemy of industrial and commercial freedom, had criticised in a practical point of view, in his *Economic Observations*, the cosmopolitan theorists who appeared to him endangering the existence of the marine and the colonies. Mabli attacked them more thoroughly than Voltaire and Forbonnais had done: he opposed to the *natural right of property*, according to the economists, his own hypothesis on primitive communism, and to their *rational despotism* the political principles which he held in common with Rousseau and Montesquieu. On the second point, it may be said that his victory was complete.¹ But, of all the blows aimed at the economists, the most resonant, both by its vigor and because it bore on the vital question of the moment, was from the hand of a new-comer, a foreigner, the Abbé Galiani, a Gallicized Italian, who had long charmed the philosophic drawing-rooms of Paris by the mad Neapolitan sallies in which his bold and impressive genius clothed itself. "His was the head of a Machiavel on the body of a buffoon," says an eloquent writer of him.² *The Dialogues on the Grain-trade* (the end of 1769), the piquant work of a brilliant wit and a subtle dialectician,³ did not oppose theory to theory, as Mabli had done. Galiani rejected all absolute theory, and maintained that the phenomena of the economic existence of nations, and of their international relations, are so complicated that it is impossible to govern them by a single principle; that the merchandise which is the very life of nations, grain, is different from all other kinds of merchandise; that all the internal obstacles to traffic throughout the kingdom should be destroyed before opening the frontiers, as the first of all commerce to a nation is that which it carries on with itself; that it would be insane in governments to permit things to drift of themselves, trusting that they will always find their *natural level*, as the people may die of famine in the interval. He asserted that it was impossible to proceed in this manner by isolated measures, and that

the species which has self-consciousness and responsibility for itself,—the human species.

¹ *Doutes sur l'Ordre naturel des Sociétés politiques*, 1768. This is perhaps the best of Mabli's works.

² Louis Blanc, *Hist. de la Révolution*, t. I. p. 545.

³ Diderot retouched them, but only for the purpose of correction: the fire was already there.

nothing should be touched unless every thing could be reorganized. He concluded, not by the prohibition of exportation, but by the establishment of a duty upon it, to be employed in the redemption of the tolls, stall and market duties and corn-dues, which fettered internal commerce,¹ and its restriction to the nations which granted reciprocity. One of these *Dialogues* contained a passage, the sagacity of which was soon to receive a terrible verification, on the *feigned exportation* of grain. "The exportation will be only apparent: the monopolizers will transport it beyond the frontiers, either to some petty sovereignty enclosed within the kingdom, or to the frontier towns, without selling it. . . . They will starve the province, and cause the disappearance of grain; then, when an exorbitant price has been attained, they will bring it in as if from the most remote countries. . . . The islands of Jersey and Guernsey will be the furtive entrepôt of the grain of Brittany, as will other countries of that of other provinces."²

The year 1769 had not been more fortunate than 1768: 1770 began in the same manner. The sedition increased in the different provinces. The government appeared to yield to the public clamor. Already Terrai had prevented the publication of the Abbé Morellet's answer to Galiani, — an answer suggested by Choiseul, who protected free exportation without regarding it as a panacea, like the economists. It was Choiseul's first check at home. Turgot, who, in his intendency of Limoges and Angoulême, nobly showed that economic freedom did not imply in his eyes the inertia of authority or the denial of social duties,³ — Turgot, who would not believe in *monopoly*, vainly strove to persuade the comptroller-general to maintain the free grain-trade, while encouraging the formation of private entrepôts. A decree of the council, July 14, 1770, temporarily suspended exportation.

The people gained nothing thereby. The dearness continued, and it was clearly seen that exportation was not the true cause of

¹ The objection of Galiani was well founded: all these duties, joined to the old police of grain, which had not been abolished, rendered the edicts which granted the free exportation of grain well-nigh illusory.

² *Dialogues sur le commerce des blés*, ap. *Mélanges d'économie politique*, t. II. p. 164; Guillaumin, 1848.

³ In conformity with a decree of the parliament of Bordeaux, he had enjoined on men in easy circumstances to unite for the purpose of providing for the subsistence of the poor during the dearth; obliged the land-owners to support those who had leased their farms on shares until the next harvest; caused grain to be purchased abroad; organized work-shops for the poor, and set the example by great personal sacrifices, although he was not rich.

the evil. Was it, then, the monopolization at home? — the monopolies exercised or protected by the agents of the government? The people no longer doubted it, and the parliaments thought like the people. The parliament of Paris again rendered several more decrees against the monopolizers before its abolition; and in January, 1771, on the eve of its destruction, it deliberated anew on the *grain question*. The economists explained the dearness by the general panic which decupled the effect of the real insufficiency of the harvests, while foreign importation did not come to arrest the suffering: for England, as unfortunate as we, had suspended her usual exportation of grain; Turkey, on account of the war, had done the same; and Poland was devastated and ruined. All this was very true; but it was not the whole truth. Terrai had suspended free exportation only to replace it by a completely arbitrary system,¹ and to turn the grain question to the advantage of the finances at his case, as Choiseul says in his Memoirs. The Malisset Association, of which the King was the principal partner, had its hands free after the destruction of the parliaments, and did exactly what Galiani had predicted. Terrai, for instance, forbade exportation in Languedoc, when the crops became better there, in order to secure the purchase of the grain at a low price by his agents:² meanwhile, he opened the ports of Brittany, and procured from that province quantities of grain, which he sent to Jersey to be stored for the purpose of bringing it back when the price was artificially raised to its height. The headquarters of the monopoly was at the royal mills and storehouses at Corbeil; but the impulse came from Versailles, and the courtiers admitted to the private office of the King could not help casting down their eyes when they saw memorandum-books on his secretary, in which was inscribed from day to day the price of grain in the different markets of the kingdom. It was in this manner that Louis XV. interpreted the lessons of Quesnai! The shamelessness became such that the editor of the *Royal Almanac* for 1774 placed among the officers of finance a Sieur Mirlavaud, the *treasurer of his Majesty's grain transactions*. The revision came too late: the edition was already issued when it was sought to stop it. The ministers, meanwhile, strove to divert the popular rancor by calumniously accusing the parliaments of having caused the dearth by their

¹ He had nominally maintained free transit at home, but paralyzed it in fact by the regulations of December, 1770, and January, 1771.

² The new parliament of Toulouse, although manufactured by Maupeou, rendered a decree in 1772 in favor of free exportation, which was quashed by the council.

patronage of exportation, and even by monopolies. The people believed both ministers and parliaments against each other. The too real evil of speculation grew to fantastic proportions in the imagination of the multitude. The suffering classes became accustomed to consider the higher classes, courtiers, magistrates, and financiers, as a legion of vampires leagued to suck the blood of the poor; and implacable hatreds, revived from time to time by new incidents, lurked in the hearts of the masses till the days of the social cataclysm, when they overflowed like a raging torrent. At the bottom of all the popular excesses of the Revolution, on looking closely, may be perceived the wan and fleshless spectre of the *Pact of Famine*.¹

We have seen Maupeou and Terrai at work. A third personage completed the ministerial triumvirate which had replaced Choiseul, — a triumvirate very imperfectly united; for Maupeou had used all his efforts to set aside the new-comer, who was no other than the Duke d'Aiguillon. D'Aiguillon had not finally attained his aim, the ministry of foreign affairs, until June, 1771; and, even then, it was owing to his intimacy with Madame du Barri. This ministry had remained for some months vacant: as to that of war and of the marine, they had been filled by obscure mediocrities, the very name of whom is unimportant to history: this shadowed forth the part that would be played abroad by the administration which succeeded Choiseul.

When D'Aiguillon entered the ministry, the chances of war with England had already disappeared. Spain, no longer hoping to be supported by France, had rendered satisfaction to England by restoring to her the post wrested from her in the Falkland Islands. By way of compensation, the great affair of Poland was hastening to the catastrophe prepared by the Machiavellian genius of Frederick. The King of Prussia was unwilling to join his arms with those of Austria for the purpose of defending Turkey against the Russians, and Austria had been unwilling to join France in defending Poland against Catharine and Frederick. The partition of Poland was the only expedient that could prevent the dismemberment of Turkey, and reconcile the three formidable neighbors. Frederick had made a new attempt with the Czarina during the winter of 1770-1771: he had despatched his brother Prince Henry, who had at length obtained from her

¹ See, in the *Moniteur* of 1789, the memorial in which the Constitution of the *Malisset* Association is found. This is the manifesto of the popular hatred: all the facts are true, but interpreted by the inflamed passions of the epoch.

a contingent consent to the partition, but given with ill grace, and by no means definitive. Catharine would have greatly preferred the Turkish provinces to a shred of that Poland, which, in reality, she held almost entire.¹ Austria was determined, on her part, to prevent the cession of the Danubian provinces to Russia. Maria Theresa, by a treaty of July 6, 1771, a treaty which was concealed from France, promised the Sultan to procure the restitution to him of the Russian conquests, and not to permit any attack on the independence of Poland. The last clause of the treaty was violated in advance!

Catharine, meanwhile, still hoped to regain the court of Vienna by giving it a share in Turkey, and in this manner avoid the necessity of yielding to Frederick. She insinuated to Vienna that France might be admitted into the mediation with respect to Poland. Maria Theresa, who was still somewhat repugnant to the partition desired by her son, accepted this overture. Kaunitz was forced to impart it to the cabinet of Versailles. The fall of Choiseul, the personal enemy of Catharine, would have facilitated the negotiation. D'Aiguillon turned a deaf ear to it. He did more: thinking to substitute the Prussian for the Austrian alliance, he revealed the secret advances of Austria and Russia to Frederick, and told the envoy of the King of Prussia that France cared little as to what transpired in Poland, and would not move on that account,—this at the same time that he promised the agent of the confederates of Bar, Wielhorski, the continuance of assistance from France, and in fact, in obedience to the King, ordered Viomesnil to set out for Poland to replace Dumouriez, who had quarrelled with the confederates in consequence of an unsuccessful encounter with the Russians.²

Frederick hastened to inform Vienna of the duplicity of the ministry of Louis XV.; and nothing remained for Austria but to enter into definitive arrangements with Prussia, as Joseph II. and Kaunitz desired. Moreover, the combination between Russia, Austria, and France, would have certainly failed; for Maria

¹ There is not a word of truth in all that Frederick and his brother have narrated concerning the journey of Prince Henry. Frederick, in the writings of his later years, undertook to deceive posterity, and to make history a great imposture, by throwing upon his accomplices the origination of the political crime which he had so long and ably planned in advance.

² This repulse was due at least as much to the indifference, or, to speak more truly, the treachery, of the cabinet of Versailles, as to the lack of discipline of the Poles. A levy of Saxon foot and some convoys of arms, which Dumouriez had prepared, were wilfully held back. — See *Mém. de Dumouriez*, t. I. ch. viii.

Theresa, who might have consented to an extension of Russian territory on the side of the Caucasus, would never have conceded the provinces of the Lower Danube, and Catharine would never have renounced these provinces without a compensation in Poland.

During the interval, the confederates, who, the year before, had declared Poniatowski degraded from the throne, sought to seize his person. On the evening of November 3, one of their parties attacked the King of Poland, wounded him, and took him prisoner in the very streets of Warsaw. Poniatowski escaped only through the repentance of one of the conspirators. There was a burst of indignation against these *fanatics*, who, it was said, had sworn the death of *their King* at the feet of a Madonna. Voltaire did not spare them. Frederick took this *regicide* as a pretext for occupying, and subjecting to ransom, the greater part of Great Poland. The exploits of the confederates, and of a few Frenchmen who fought in their ranks, did not compensate for the bad effects of this incident. At the beginning of 1772, the Franco-Poles surprised Cracow. A French officer, Choisi, shut himself up in the citadel, and defended it heroically against the Russians; but the commander-in-chief, Viomesnil, was unable to succor it from without, and the garrison was compelled to surrender, April 15. The French prisoners, sent to Russia, were abandoned by their government; and Voltaire and D'Alembert vainly solicited their liberty from Catharine.

The dismemberment of Poland was consummated meanwhile. Catharine having finally decided to renounce the Danubian provinces, no more obstacles remained to the projects of Frederick. February 17, 1772, a secret agreement was signed at St. Petersburg between Russia and Prussia. Their respective shares were assigned to the two allies; and it was agreed to offer Austria hers, and to unite against her if she opposed the partition. This threat was a weapon offered to Joseph II. and Kaunitz for the purpose of conquering the scruples of Maria Theresa. Austria suffered violence to be done her with a very good grace; for she acceded in principle to the partition of March 4, reserving the right of regulating the conditions. Maria Theresa afterwards pretended that she had only assented to the partition with the hope of discouraging her copartners by the exorbitance of her demands, and was grieved, she said, to see the King of Prussia and the Czarina fully grant her claims.¹ The sincerity of this story is very suspicious:

¹ Correspondence of the French Ambassador, Breteuil, in Flassan, t. VII. p. 124.

for the demands, *very exorbitant*, in fact, of the Empress-Queen, were long disputed, and obstinately maintained; and the definitive treaty was not signed, August 5, until after Austria had somewhat moderated her pretensions.

When the cabinet of Versailles attempted to manifest its surprise at what it had full leisure to foresee, and to complain of the ally that had deceived it, Kaunitz replied to D'Aiguillon by arrogant recriminations, in which, nevertheless, there was one true sentence: "You would not have sustained us!" Only Austria did not wish *to be sustained*: Choiseul had put her to the test.¹

The confederates were overpowered and dispersed; and all Poland was invaded, and crushed by the arms of the three powers, when the treaty of partition was made known at Warsaw, September 2, 1772. To the Czarina were assigned three thousand square leagues and one million five hundred thousand souls in Lithuania and Polish Livonia; to the King of Prussia, Polish Prussia, comprising nine hundred square leagues and eight hundred and sixty thousand souls; and to Austria, twenty-five hundred square leagues and two million five hundred thousand souls in Red Russia, and the Polish palatinates on the left of the Vistula. Austria was resolved at least that the crime should be lucrative. The principal author of the partition had been the most modest: he had renounced Dantzic, which Russia, at the instigation of England, had refused him. Frederick was quite sure that Prussia, master of the Lower Vistula, would have Dantzic and Posnania sooner or later. The imaginary pretexts which were alleged, and the pretended *rights* which were claimed by the cabinets over the usurped territories, were even more odious than the shameless acknowledgment of the right of force had been. The simulacrum of a diet, convoked in April, 1773, ratified under the bayonet, by a majority of two votes, the mutilation of the Polish republic.²

Thus commenced that murder of a great people, which opened to old Europe the era of subversion and destruction, — the sombre era, in which the modern idea of right had not yet succeeded the ancient idea of right, annihilated. Voltaire and the encyclopedists, blinded by their anti-Polish prejudices and by the cosmopolitanism which obscured the idea of nationality in their minds, did not comprehend this, applauded it, or were silent. Rousseau had comprehended it! He saw clearly that something more was

¹ Saint-Priest, *Partage de la Pologne*, § v.

² Catharine and Frederick, the partition consummated, wholly forgot the cause of the Dissidents, so long their pretext.

in question than a victory over fanaticism and serfdom. Of the three authors of the great crime, the first, Catharine, lightly bore the weight in her hand red with the blood of two Czars; the second, Frederick, too withered in heart to repent, but too enlightened not to foresee the judgment of posterity, endeavored to lessen the chief responsibility which was destined to rest upon his memory; the third, Maria Theresa, more than once suffered the confession of her remorse to escape her. "Count von Barck," she said one day to the Swedish ambassador, "the affair of Poland drives me to despair. . . . It is a blot on my reign!"—"Sovereigns," replied the embarrassed minister, "are accountable to God alone."—"It is this also that I fear."¹

Mutilated Poland was destined to drag out its mournful existence a score of years longer, vainly striving to reform and reorganize itself under the pitiless hand of its oppressors.² This noble nation perished, the victim of an unrealizable ideal,—the law of unanimity, absolute individual sovereignty,—as much as of a culpable contradiction between the ideal and the real, the liberty of the few and the serfdom of the many. If it rises again, it will be, however, only to resume this ideal within the bounds of possibility. If Poland does not represent liberty and individuality in that Slavic world which is a prey to despotism, there is no reason for her regeneration.

After the notification of the partition, Louis XV. seemed to awaken for a moment. He had a weak desire to avenge Poland,

¹ Saint-Priest, § 5. Maria Theresa was one of those complex characters, with little openness and simplicity, in which decorum holds the first place, and which lack sincerity towards others and themselves, without being really hypocritical: the cry of the heart sometimes escapes them.

² It attempted too late to profit by the counsels which it had asked of Rousseau and Mably. The work of Mably had been written as early as 1770; that of Rousseau, not until 1772. Mably, making his maxims bend to what he regarded as a necessity in Poland, pronounced himself in favor of hereditary royalty. Rousseau opposed it; but he desired the abolition of the *liberum veto*, and proposed a plan of national education, and an extremely wise and practical plan for the admission of towns to political rights, and for the gradual emancipation of the serfs, who were to be initiated, first into individual liberty, next into municipal liberty, then into national liberty. "It is necessary to begin by rendering them worthy of liberty,—to free their souls before freeing their bodies. Polish nobles, never flatter yourselves with being free while you hold your brethren in chains." He advised, instead of a regular army, an organization analogous to that of the Helvetic militia and the present *landwehrs* of Germany. He consoled Poland in advance for the partition about to be effected by asserting that a partial dismemberment of this vast and weak body might be the cause of its salvation. "Poles," he exclaims, "you cannot prevent your neighbors from swallowing you: render it at least impossible for them to digest you. If you act in such a manner that a Pole can never become a Russian, Russia will never subjugate Poland."

as he had had a weak desire to defend it. D'Aiguillon feared lest the King might throw the blame upon him : he affected great anger, and offered to concert with England respecting the Polish question. The English cabinet refused : it only wished to prevent the Prussians from taking Dantzic, and considered itself satisfied with having temporarily succeeded. D'Aiguillon proposed to the King to invade Belgium, then to take up arms in concert with Spain for the purpose of attacking the Russians in the Archipelago, and forcing Catharine to a compromise. Some maritime expeditions were fitted out, in fact, in the beginning of 1773. England signified that she should aid the Russians. Louis XV. recoiled, as D'Aiguillon had calculated ; and all was over. If the part of the French government was pitiable in the Polish question, that of the English government was odious. The cabinet of St. James may well be regarded as the fourth of the murderers of Poland.¹

A maritime intervention against the Russians in 1773 might, indeed, have greatly modified the situation. After completing the occupation of Little Tartary by the conquest of the Crimea, they had crossed the Danube ; but there their successes had been arrested. They were driven from Bulgaria by the Turks ; and a great rebellion, incited among the Cossacks of the Don and the Jaïk by a counterfeit Peter III., the Cossack Pugatchev, was beginning to reach Moscow, and to imperil the throne of Catharine. A revolution which had been effected in Sweden some months before (August, 1772), with the support and pecuniary encouragement of the cabinet of Versailles, might have increased the dangers of Russia. The young King, Gustavus III., by a military *coup d'état*, had overthrown, in behalf of the royal supremacy, the government of the Senate, a kind of aristocratic republic, established after the death of Charles XII. ;² and, able to dispose

¹ Ed. Burke, *Annual Register*, 1763, vol. xvi. ch. v.

² This revolution divided our writers, like the partition of Poland : it grieved Mably, who had predicted the fairest destinies to the Swedish constitution ; and rejoiced Voltaire, who saw in Gustavus III. a new philosophic monarch. Gustavus began his career after his *coup d'état* by abolishing torture. All the philosophers, except Frederick, agreed in deploring another revolution in an inverse direction which had occurred in Denmark in the preceding month of January, and which precipitated the physician-minister Struensee from the steps of the throne to the scaffold. The establishment of the full liberty of the press, the encroachment upon the privileges of the nobility, the reduction of the somewhat burdensome authority of the Lutheran clergy, and the facilitation of divorce, had signalized the administration, praiseworthy in many respects, and imprudent in some others, of the plebeian whom the love of a queen had imposed on the weak Christian VII. Another queen, the mother of

of Sweden, was very desirous of employing its resources in reconquering the provinces wrested from the Swedes by Peter the Great. The inaction of France did not permit Gustavus to undertake an enterprise, the success of which was rendered impossible by the Russo-Prussian alliance. The Turks did not know how to profit by their advantages. In the spring of 1774, the Russians returned to Bulgaria. The Grand Vizier suffered himself to be blockaded in his camp, and forced to a disastrous capitulation. Azof, Jenikale, Kinburn, and the portion of Little Tartary between the Dnieper and the Bug, were ceded to the Czarina. The Ottoman empire renounced the sovereignty of the Crimea, which became independent in the interval of becoming Russian; and free navigation in Ottoman waters was granted to the Russians (July 10, 1774). Catharine, rid of foreign war, crushed the rebellious Cossacks; and Russia strengthened herself at leisure in her usurpation. The covetous Austria, on her side, not content with having compensated herself at the expense of Poland for her losses in the wars of 1733 and 1740, forced Turkey to compensate her, at the expense of the Moldavians, for the services promised, and not rendered; and obtained the cession of an important canton of Moldavia, Bukowina, which commanded the upper part of the Pruth.

While the powers of Eastern Europe were aggrandizing themselves by a daring crime, the government of France was sinking deeper into enervating vices. Shamefully despotic, it did not succeed in making itself feared, although the liberty and interests of many citizens were attacked by its arbitrariness, and the Bastille was always full. None resisted, but all despised it. It was doubtful whether this patience would endure much longer. The high price of grain, which still continued, partly through the fault of Nature and partly through that of men, occasioned frequent riots, especially in the south.¹ The people still continued to lay the blame materially on the bakers, the municipal officers, and the inferior agents of the royal power; but they were beginning to understand that the great monopolizer was at Versailles.² As to

Christian, overthrew the citizen and philosopher-minister by a conspiracy of the higher Lutheran nobility. The reforms of Struensee perished with him.

¹ The *maire* of Albi was killed in one of these seditions. At Montauban, the riot was only repressed by a bloody discharge of musketry. At another place, the soldiers refused to fire.

² The cry of the populace, on the 5TH and 6TH of OCTOBER, will be remembered: "Let us go to Versailles in search of the baker." The royal crime had ceased; the tradition remained.

the classes in easy circumstances, their opposition presented a mixture of the old habit of mocking gayety and the earnestness which was taking possession of the French mind. Pleasantry became an edged weapon ; irony rose to genius. Maupeou had counted too much on the levity and forgetful temper of France : he had hoped, that, the first flame spent, men would become accustomed to his parliaments. They did not become accustomed to them ; and one of those blows from which a new institution never rises was dealt to them in 1773 by a vulgar suit, which a man of prodigious mind made a European event. We need not dwell here upon Beaumarchais, a man of enterprise and a financier, a courtier, a man of pleasure, an intriguer, lastly, a literary man, and a philosopher at his leisure, a kind of inferior Voltaire, in whom public affairs, however, took the first place, and letters the second.¹ It is known how, from a petty incident, the exaction of fifteen louis by the wife of a counsellor for obtaining an interview with her husband, Beaumarchais succeeded in making evident the degradation of all the new magistracy, and taught the public the cost of the *gratuitous justice* of Maupeou. If Beaumarchais showed himself at times the legitimate son of Molière, it was less in his two comedies, so charming and sparkling, but somewhat factitious and in equivocal taste, than in the colloquies of the Memorials against Gozman and Marin. It suffices to say, for his glory, that Voltaire was jealous of and converted by him. The patriarch believed himself almost threatened with a successor, and abandoned the cause of the Maupeou parliaments.

The leaders of this so much decried government had not even the wisdom to sustain each other against the public hostility. Each of the triumvirs aimed at becoming prime minister. Maupeou, at first, in order to maintain the adulterous alliance between the *Du Barri party* and the former party of the Dauphin, an alliance into which even the pious Christophe de Beaumont had been drawn, went in the morning to communicate at St. Denis, in the presence of Madame Louise, one of the King's daughters who had assumed the Carmelite garb ; and, in the afternoon, returned to display his robes at the toilet of the King's mistress. Since he had believed himself triumphant, he had been a little less cringing before the favorite ; and his colleague Terrai sought to take advantage of his *ingratitude* to supplant him, and to make himself chancellor and cardinal. There was the stuff in Terrai for a second Dubois. An incident will complete the picture of Versailles at

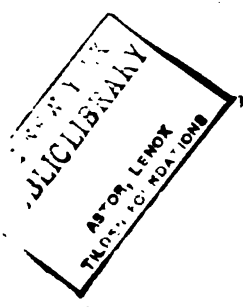
¹ Born at Paris in 1732.



Tableau du temps

*Louise-Marie de France (Madame Louise)
Prieur des Carmélites de S.^t Denis 1777*

Diographe et Sautygraphe Lenoir



that epoch. One day, the Pope's nuncio, and the grand almoner, the Cardinal de la Roche-Aimon, was seen presenting her slippers to Madame du Barri at her toilet. It is asserted that the favorite carried her madness so far as to dream of marrying the King. She had openly solicited the annulment of her marriage with the Count du Barri, on the ground that the *weakness* which she had had for his brother made it a kind of incest!

The fear of hell still seized the King at times; and it was this that had for a moment suggested to Madame du Barri the ludicrous idea of playing the part of Madame de Maintenon. While the first dignitaries of the Church were prostituting the Roman purple at the feet of a courtesan, a simple priest had dared to raise a Christian voice in Versailles. The Abbé de Beauvais, in preaching the Holy-Thursday sermon for 1773 in the presence of the King and the favorite, stupefied the court by the following allusion: "Solomon, satiated with voluptuousness, and wearied with having exhausted every sort of pleasure around the throne in awakening his palled senses, finally sought a new kind in the vile dregs of public corruption!"

He expected disgrace at least, if not the Bastille: he received a bishopric.¹ Louis XV. rewarded the rude counsellor, but did not profit by the advice. The Du Barris, terrified, plunged him deeper than ever into degradation; and the favorite summoned to her aid all the ignominy of the Parc-aux-Cerfs.² Where she sought a support she found ruin, and Louis found death. The obscene old man was at length struck by his own vice, and his last victim hurried him to the tomb. A child scarcely nubile, the daughter of a miller in the suburbs of Trianon, had been enticed away by dint of threats and promises, and delivered over to Louis by the royal procurers. She bore in her bosom the germs of the small-pox, of which she died shortly after, and which she communicated to the King. April 29, 1774, the disease declared itself in Louis XV., complicated with a shameful disorder which was lurking in his vitiated blood.³ The Du Barris and their allies stood out for a

¹ *Mém. secrets de Bachaumont*, t. VI., March-May, 1773-VII., April, 1774. The Abbé de Beauvais, despite his aristocratic name, belonged to a family of artisans, which is remarked in the *Mémoires* of Bachaumont as a very rare exception among the bishops. Moreover, Beauvais was as intolerant as rigid, and advocated the use of force in religious questions.

² We speak metaphorically; for the real Parc-aux-Cerfs, the house in the Rue Saint-Médéric, had been sold by the King in 1771.

³ His three daughters, who had not had the small-pox, set a noble example of filial devotion by shutting themselves up with him to nurse him.

few days against those who talked of repentance and the sacraments. Nevertheless, as the disease continued to grow worse, Louis sent the favorite to the house of the Duke d'Aiguillon at Ruel, and the next morning received the sacraments, declaring, that, "*although he owed an account of his conduct to God alone*, he repented of having scandalized his subjects" (May 6). Expiring absolutism still stammered its formulas amidst the death-rattle.

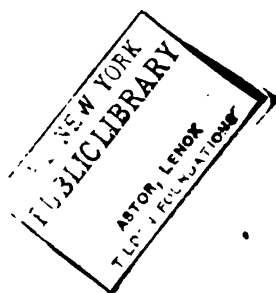
As at the time of the celebrated journey to Metz in 1744, Versailles, Paris, and all France, anxiously awaited, from day to day and from hour to hour, intelligence of the health of the prince, formerly styled *Louis the Well-beloved*; but this time they trembled with a single fear, — that he might return to life. When it was known that he had finally expired at two o'clock in the afternoon of May 10, an enormous weight seemed lifted from all hearts.¹ His gangrened remains, which infected the air, were transported at full gallop, and without a funeral retinue, to St. Denis, amidst the jeers of the crowd that lined the way.

Louis XV. had lived sixty-four years, and reigned fifty-nine. He had passed his life in destroying by degrees the prestige which the two great Bourbon kings, Henri IV. and Louis XIV., had lent to modern royalty, — a prestige already greatly weakened in the old age of Louis the Great. The enthroning of these agents of dissolution, these personifications of contempt, was a providential sign of the condemnation of the royal race and institution.

¹ The *Mémoires* of Bachaumont quote a piquant saying of the Abbé de Sainte-Geneviève. As some young philosophers were jesting with him on the inefficacy of the intervention of his saint in the illness of the late King, — "Of what do you complain?" he answered — "is he not dead?" — *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. VII. p. 208.



Convoi de Louis XV.



CHAPTER V.

LOUIS XVI. AND TURGOT.

LOUIS XVI. AND HIS FAMILY. Maurepas summoned to Power. Fall of the *Triumvirate*. TURGOT Comptroller-General. His Plans of Reform: the *Great Municipality of the Kingdom*, etc. Reestablishment of the Parliaments. Economic Reforms. Freedom of the Grain-trade. Attack of NECKER upon the Plans of Turgot. Coalition of the Privileged Classes against Turgot. The Philosophers divided on the Economic Question. Voltaire the Champion of Turgot. *The Flour War*. The Sedition fomented by the Privileged Classes repressed. Celebrated Remonstrances of the Court of Aids against the Fiscal System. Their Author, Malesherbes, summoned to the Ministry. Numerous Economic Ameliorations. Military Reforms of the Count de Saint-Germain. Abolition of the *Corvée*. Abolition of Wardenships and Masterships of Trade Corporations. Establishment of the Freedom of Commerce and Manufactures. Resistance of the Parliament, and violent Attacks on Turgot. Bed of Justice. Freedom of the Wine-trade. The Princes, Maurepas, the Court, and the Parliament unite against Turgot. Fall of Turgot and Malesherbes.

1774-1776.

THE unfortunate reign of him who was destined to be the last king of ancient France opened amidst the unanimous acclamations of the capital and the kingdom. France experienced nothing but joy on being delivered from the impure old man who had been so long the shame of the nation. Little was known of the new king, who had hitherto lived in great retirement, like his father before him; but it was said that he bore no resemblance to his grandfather, and this was enough for the people.

The sentiments of the court were less decided. The courtiers felt themselves in the hands of a young man of twenty, who manifested none of the tastes of his age and rank, and who seemed to offer them no hold on him. A king without vices or passions was to them a disquieting enigma. Even those of the men of the court who rejoiced to see the end of the ignoble sway of the Du Barri party feared lest Versailles might pass from one extreme to the other. A saying of Louis XVI., while yet Dauphin, had caused a sort of panic among the courtiers. While at Paris, as a stinging epigram on his grandfather, he had been surnamed Louis the *Desired*: some of the courtiers having one day asked him what surname he preferred, "I would like," he replied,

"to be called *Louis the Severe*."¹ A harsh and gloomy reign was therefore dreaded at Versailles. The expression of abruptness and ill-humor, which was in some degree habitual to the youthful monarch, strengthened these apprehensions. The education which he had received from his governor, La Vauguyon, had increased his natural shyness, the cause of which was not harshness, as was supposed, but timidity, and repugnance to the state of manners of which he was a witness. Any one who had more attentively examined his physiognomy, from which the majesty blended with elegance, the grand Bourbon air, preserved by Louis XV. even in his degradation, had disappeared, would have discerned therein, under a vulgar expression, a groundwork of goodness, and, above all, of great integrity. It was not the features that were vulgar, but the carriage, the gesture, the precocious obesity, the awkward and ungraceful mien, the hesitating and embarrassed speech. He was only at his ease in the midst of his books; for he was well instructed, and very fond of the natural sciences; or, still better, in his locksmith's shop. If he had a passion, it was for manual labor. He followed the precepts of *Émile* through taste, and not through system. Nature had given him the faculties of a skilful and upright mechanic: human laws had made him the head of an empire, to his own misfortune and that of his people.

The rudeness of his manners and his fretful disposition were destined to become softened by acquaintance with the family affections, so powerful over simple natures; but, at this epoch, the pleasures of private life were still unknown to him. An icy barrier, so to speak, subsisted between him and his young wife, which nothing had been able to melt. La Vauguyon, through hatred of Choiseul, supposed to be much more Austrian than he was in reality, had suggested to the Dauphin tenacious prejudices against the daughter of Maria Theresa, the instrument through whom her ambitious mother aspired, he said, to govern France. This was not all: Louis XVI. was not yet truly the husband of Marie-Antoinette. A secret infirmity, a defect of conformation, over which the art of the physicians succeeded in triumphing a little later, made him despair of ever having heirs.²

The true character of Louis XVI., unknown at his accession, and wrongly interpreted afterwards by other causes, appears in two truly precious documents, which produce very different im-

¹ Droz, *Hist. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 118.

² *Ibid.*, p. 122. There are frequent allusions to this circumstance in the Secret Memoirs, attributed to Bachaumont.

pressions. The one is the *Journal*, written by his own hand during his reign;¹ the other, composed by him before his accession, is entitled *My Reflections on my Conversations with the Duke de La Vauguyon*.² The *Journal* is incredibly monotonous: the chase, meals, and the mass appear on every page. "I have missed two hunts. I have digested badly." He found few other events to record in those formidable days, which were deciding his fate and that of France! He noted in his account-book items of expenditure of the amount of four sous. Little is found in this *Journal* but innocence and poverty of mind. The *Reflections* are very different. In this well-considered work, the upright but somewhat commonplace sense of Louis attains at times a much greater height than could have been expected from it: there is sometimes loftiness, and always sensibility. It is, so to speak, a reflection of the late Duke of Burgundy, cast on Louis XVI. from the late Dauphin, his father. As to the principles, they are absolutism, tempered by Christian sentiment. The King is the sole power: legislation belongs to him alone. It is his *right* to levy taxes for the necessities of the State (without consulting his subjects), but his *duty* to practise economy. Some of the maxims of Rousseau and the economists insinuate themselves through these notions of the past. For instance: The sovereign should legislate only by general acts. There are long observations on the knowledge of men, on firmness, and on irresolution. "I am content," he says, "with what I find in my own heart" (on firmness)! He thus strove to reassure himself concerning his own character, and to strengthen himself in advance. The fate of Charles I. already excites his uneasiness: this name exercises a sort of remote fascination over him. This little book wrings the heart. The *Journal* obtains only disdainful compassion; it is the man in the triviality of the daily routine in which he is absorbed: but the *Reflections* inspire a painful esteem and sympathy; they are the man communing with his conscience, and elevating himself above his nature by the force of moral and religious sentiment.

Louis XVI. was quite the reverse of what he wished to be; that is, he was indecision itself. Later, the variations of weakness would be regarded in him as the schemes of insincerity, and would precipitate him upon the scaffold! Like Louis XV., he saw well, and acted ill: he had good judgment, but derived no

¹ Published in extracts in the *Revue retrospective*.

² Paris, 1851, 8vo.

advantage from it in action, not through selfish carelessness, like his grandfather, but through distrust of himself, through lack of will, and consistency of mind. A nature devoted to misfortune, a defenceless victim, destined, like the sacrifices of antique systems of religion, to expiate the errors and crimes of others, — these are the hardest mysteries of history and Providence. What had he done to be born a king?

Louis offered the most absolute contrast to his kindred as well as to the court. The new Queen bore no more resemblance to her mother, Maria Theresa, than to her husband. Lively, impetuous, wholly spontaneous, violent and generous; alike hasty in her affections and her antipathies; ruling herself in every thing by feeling, and not by reflection; reacting instinctively against that *decorum* which was the first law with her mother, and with much greater reason against that insupportable etiquette of the seventeenth century which had survived dignity and elegance of manners in France under Louis XV., and the disappearance of which had been witnessed at Vienna since the accession of the House of Lorraine, — Marie-Antoinette had all the animation and originality in which her husband was lacking: but, at this epoch, she possessed as yet no influence over him, and, as will be but too well seen, it was not to be desired that she should acquire this influence. Very badly brought up, and very ignorant, nothing had been done to form her judgment and to restrain her nature, as energetic in its faults as in its happy qualities. She was wholly lacking in tact. That subversion of etiquette, that familiar simplicity, that free life which she openly allowed herself, might have been a power, a source of popularity, in a young queen full of grace and attraction.¹ But, for this, it was necessary that Marie-Antoinette should know how to turn the gratification of her tastes to political advantage, and that the public should be able to see, in this abandonment of ancient usages, an assent to the new philosophy, a pledge offered to progress. If, on the contrary, the Queen clung with one hand to the prejudices and privileges which she shook off with the other, nought but caprice and levity would be seen in the innovations introduced by her at court; and ere long the interpretations still more fatal to the honor of the throne, which were already insinuated by her enemies, would be accepted. The system of defamation under which the daughter of Maria Theresa

¹ Large, and admirably well made; . . . with the best mien of any woman in France, carrying her head high on a beautiful Greek neck. — *Mém. de madame Vigée-Lebrun*, t. I. p. 64.

was to succumb had commenced from the moment that she had set foot in France. From the first day, she found herself the butt of the cabal of La Vauguyon and the ex-Jesuits, who regarded her marriage as the work of their enemy Choiseul, and of the Du Barri party, who feared the ascendancy which she might gain at court.¹ Always, as long as Maria Theresa reigned, she was destined to meet some interest or rabid passion continuing this hidden work. The axe of the populace which was to strike off her royal head was forged long in advance on the steps of the throne. The secret intrigues of the first enemies of the Queen would be taken up by the King's own brother, the Count de Provence; that heartless wit, who was one day to be Louis XVIII., a young man without youth, a cold and insincere soul, a sceptic, who had nothing of his age except the negations.²

Louis XVI. had still another brother, Charles, the Count d'Artois, who differed equally from his two elder brothers. The latter, giddy, noisy, and dissolute, with an open heart and an easy temper, had all the faults of youth, without any prominent good quality or marked characteristic. Among the princes of the blood, the Condés, with a somewhat military tendency, seemed, nevertheless, too mediocre to be destined to any rôle of importance; and the Duke of Orleans, the grandson of the Regent, cared only for the pleasures of private life. Two princes alone were adapted to play an important part in the times which were approaching: one was that Conti, of a restless and active intellect, who has often figured in our narrative, but who was becoming prematurely old from an irregular life; the other was the son of the Duke of Orleans, Philippe, the Duke de Chartres, a lover of noisy debauches and of every kind of bustle and excitement. He had imbibed from his age a taste for innovations, whatever they might be, as the Count de Provence had imbibed a taste for scepticism. He was found wherever a new idea or a new fact appeared; although there was in this neither an enlightened and earnest love of progress,

¹ See the *Mémoires* of the ex-Jesuit Georgel, one of the enemies of the Queen, t. I.

² The most infamous rumors concerning the morals of the Queen were circulated long before her quarrel with the Duke de Chartres; and the Royalist writers have been wrong in imputing them to the Palais-Royal, which only repeated them afterwards. See what is said in the *Mémoires* of Bachaumont of the lampoons against the Queen, which were current in 1776, t. IX. pp. 54, 61, 69; and what is related by the Abbé Baudeau in his *Chronique secrète*, from 1774, ap. *Revue rétrospective*, t. III. p. 381, 1834. Baudeau imputes the *horrible things* which were retailed concerning the Queen to the cabal of the chancellor and the King's aunts. The accusation appears to us unjust or exaggerated as to the aunts of the King.

nor the calculation of so profound an ambition as was afterwards imputed to him. He agitated for the sake of agitating, and was destined always to be hurried away by events, and never to direct them.

Louis XVI. began his career by an act of ill-sustained severity, followed by an act of weakness. He sent Madame du Barri to a convent; then permitted her to leave it, and to retire to her beautiful estate of Louvecienne, near Marly.¹ The public expected that the ministry would follow the favorite. Louis had not yet resolved on his course in this respect; but, feeling that none of the *triumvirs* deserved confidence, he sought a confidential counsellor outside of his cabinet who could guide his inexperience. The Queen, docile to her mother's impulse, desired Choiseul's recall. Maria Theresa, although Choiseul had shown himself much too French to satisfy her, would have greatly preferred him in the ministry of foreign affairs to the Duke d'Aiguillon, who had sought the support of Prussia. The court quite generally formed the same wish, and the public was not unfavorable to it; but the prejudices of the King were unconquerable. He declared that the man who had been wanting in respect to his father should never be his minister. He suspected Choiseul of having done more than offend his father, and insinuations as atrocious as improbable had left their traces in his mind.

The King's first thought rested on a statesman who had been absent seventeen years from public affairs, — M. de Machault. Louis knew that his father had retained great esteem for this ex-comptroller-general; although he was viewed with an unfriendly eye by the clergy, whose pecuniary privileges he had threatened.² Machault, without being by any means a perfect statesman, had incontestable probity, broad reformatory views with respect to finance, and the force of character necessary to realize them. The choice was a sensible one: no sooner, therefore, was the King's intention suspected, than the interests opposed to the public good combined together to dissuade him from his design. La Vauguyon was dead; but the ex-Jesuit Radonvilliers, formerly sub-preceptor to the King, the organ of the clerical party, and the ministers D'Aiguillon and La Vrillière,³ gained over Madame

¹ She died on the scaffold during the Reign of Terror.

² See, in Soulavie, *Mém. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. I., the list of several persons recommended by the Dauphin to the one of his children who should succeed Louis XV. This list is curious.

³ Saint-Florentin, became the Duke de La Vrillière.





J.B. Greuze 1755

Marie Adélaïde de France
(Madame Adélaïde, 1800)

Adelaide, one of the King's aunts, who made pretensions to politics, and had some credit with her nephew. Madame Adelaide suggested a different name to Louis, that of another minister hurled from power by Madame de Pompadour eight years before Machault; the witty, selfish, and frivolous Maurepas, the uncle of D'Aiguillon, and the brother-in-law of La Vrillière. He was seventy-three years old. Madame Adelaide pretended that age and retirement had rendered him wise and grave, while respecting the charms of his mind and the quickness of his intellect. Maurepas figured, like Machault, in the list of persons recommended by the late Dauphin. Louis believed his aunt, and recalled a page, who had already mounted his horse, to carry to Machault a letter summoning him to Versailles. It is pretended that the address alone was changed, and that the letter written to Machault served for Maurepas.¹ Louis wished at first, it is said, only to consult Maurepas; but the cunning old man, after the first interview, suddenly found himself prime minister in fact, almost before the King was aware of it.² It was in this manner that Louis XVI. practised his maxims on firmness, the knowledge of men, and the distinction which should be made by kings between a solid and a frivolous mind. He replaced the State, on the eve of the tempest, in the hands of a man whom the Marquis de Mirabeau too justly styled the *Paroquet of the Regency*, who fancied himself able to ward off a revolution with a jest, and who was incapable of any other policy than that which had caused Louis XV. to say, "*It will last quite as long as I!*"

The public had scarcely formed a definite opinion of Maurepas, of whom it had so long lost sight; but it awaited with extreme impatience the fall of the triumvirate and of the Maupeou parliaments, two questions which it confounded together, but which,

¹ Droz, *Hist. de Louis XVI.*, t. I. pp. 125-127; *Mém. de madame Campan* (reader to the aunts of Louis XVI.), t. I. p. 89. The letter is in the *Mémoires de Bachaumont*, t. VII. p. 196; London, 1777.

² His plan of rule was simple: he told the young King that an administrator could properly execute only his own ideas, and that it was consequently necessary either to adopt them or to dismiss him; at the same time, he requested each of the ministers to make no important proposition without first conferring with him. The ministers, therefore, were to propose nothing but what suited Maurepas, and the King was to approve every thing which the ministers proposed. The Mentor was present whenever a project was submitted to the King; and, if he was dissatisfied with it, he could avail himself of his privilege to converse with the King at any time to demonstrate that the moment had come to refuse to follow the ideas of the administrator, and to dismiss him. — Droz, *Hist. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 128. The Count de Maurepas assumed no other official rank than that of minister without a department.

nevertheless, were distinct. The ministers made desperate efforts to sustain themselves. The Abbé Terrai presented to the King a financial report, drawn up with extreme ability,¹ in which he passed lightly over all his obnoxious operations; laid great stress on the increase of the receipts due to his care; and represented, that if the balance reëstablished by him had been disturbed anew, and he had been obliged again to commence the anticipations and other expedients, the fault had been in the increased expenditures in the other ministerial departments and in the King's household,² contrary to the promises of reduction which had been made him. He concluded by affirming that it was impossible to hope for any notable increase in the revenue from the taxes, which were raised to their maximum; and that economy, therefore, was absolutely necessary. "I can add nothing more to the receipts, which I have increased sixty millions. I can deduct nothing more from the debt, which I have reduced twenty millions. . . It is for you, sire, to relieve your people by reducing your expenses. This work, so worthy of your *sensibility*, has been reserved for you."

The Abbé Terrai talking of *sensibility* was like the wolf bewailing the sheep; but his work was none the less specious, and adapted to make an impression on Louis XVI. He strengthened his words by deeds, by hastening to propose a measure which he knew to be in the heart of the young King. The first ordinance signed by Louis XVI., proclaiming that the felicity of the people depended chiefly on a wise financial administration, announced that the arrears of *rentes*, posts, interests, and various debts, and the redemptions promised, would be faithfully acquitted; that funds were set apart for this purpose; that the King was employing himself in reducing his personal expenses and those pertaining to the *pomp of the court*; and, lastly, that the King remitted to his subjects the revenue arising from the tribute which belonged to him on the occasion of his accession to the crown.³

¹ It is just to say that this document was not prepared in view of the circumstances. According to documents preserved in the Terrai Family, this same report had been already presented to Louis XV., March 20, 1774.

² The expenses of the households of the King and the Princes had been increased from twenty-six to more than thirty-six millions since the formation of the households of the Dauphiness, the brothers and the sisters-in-law of the Dauphin. — See *Comptes rendus des Finances*, 1751–1787, pp. 115, 169. The households of the King's two brothers and their wives cost together seven million three hundred and twelve thousand livres, equal to twelve or thirteen millions at the present time. — *Ibid.*, p. 141. Many sovereigns had not such households.

³ Registered May 30 in the parliament of Paris. — See *Anciennes Loix françaises*,

The *droit de joyeux avènement* had been farmed out for twenty-three million under Louis XV., and had cost the tax-payers more than forty-one millions! The farmers had made nearly a hundred per cent.

At the same time, bread fell, in consequence of a bad speculation of the association of the *Pact of Famine*, which had been unable to sell in foreign countries, already sufficiently supplied, the grain exported from France by secret permits, and had been obliged to bring it back to the French markets.¹ Some first reforms were effected at court,² in conformity with the King's promise; and a large number of persons imprisoned by *lettres de cachet* was released by decrees.

The impression on the public was not such as had been hoped at Versailles. The hand through which the boon came took away its value. The remission of the *joyous accession* was approved; but the language of the ordinance, which sanctioned this tribute while forbearing to demand it, was censured. This pretended tribute, it was said, was merely a feudal exaction not recognized by the parliaments. The gracious reception accorded by the King and Queen to the deputation from the Maupeou parliament (June 5) displeased the bourgeoisie. The price of bread was not long in rising again, and disappointing the hopes of the indigent classes.

Public opinion, nevertheless, had obtained a first satisfaction. The Duke d'Aiguillon was no longer in the ministry. Detested by the Queen, he had had the imprudence to patronize somewhat too openly the sayings and ballads which were circulated against Marie-Antoinette by the ancient cabals hostile to the Austrian marriage, increased by the courtiers whom the Queen wounded by her thoughtless satire. Marie-Antoinette demanded justice on the insolence of the minister; and Maurepas believed himself unable to support his nephew, although he partly owed him his new posi-

t. XXIII. pp. 4-7. Marie-Antoinette renounced, on her side, the tribute called the *droit de ceinture de la reine* (Right of the Queen's Girdle).

¹ *Mém. sur l'administration de l'abbé Terrai*, p. 226; *Merc. historique*, t. CLXXVI. p. 673.

² "The extraordinary expenses, the petty expenses, the *grand commun* (service of the tables of certain officers of the King's household), the governors of the royal households, and the court theatricals, are abolished, . . . with deer-hunting and hawk-ing. Considerable reformation is made in the stables and kennels. The King has given orders that but a single table shall be served at court, which shall be common to his Majesty, the Queen, Monsieur, Madame, and the Count and Countess d'Artois."—*Merc. hist.*, t. CLXXVI. p. 671.

tion. D'Aiguillon was forbidden to appear again at court. Of the two ministries which he had held, that of foreign affairs was intrusted to the Count de Vergennes, who had given proof of diplomatic talent in the embassies to Constantinople and Stockholm (June 8): the other, the ministry of war, was given to the Count de Mui, a rigid devotee and a laborious administrator, the most esteemed among the friends of the late Dauphin.

After an interval of a few weeks, a second change took place, which made less noise, but which was of far more real importance than the dismissal of D'Aiguillon. The minister of the marine, De Boines, an intriguer, who was regarded as the ally of Maupeou, was removed. Maurepas, at the instigation of his wife, herself advised by a philosopher-priest, the Abbé de Véri, caused De Boines to be replaced by Turgot, whose administration of the generality of Limoges¹ had long attracted the eyes and hopes of enlightened men. Turgot had voluntarily remained in the second-class intendency of Limousin. He had become attached to this destitute province by the good which he had done it, and had refused, as early as 1762, two first-class intendancies, Rouen and Lyons.² He did not deem himself justified in refusing, with the ministry, the great duties and ordeals for which he had long been preparing himself. He accepted the wholly special department which was offered him, as a transition to a more direct and general action on the fate of the country (July 19-22, 1774).

Maurepas, too sceptical to seek true renown, delighted in drawing-room praise and success: he had been persuaded that the men who ruled public opinion gave him infinite credit for his choice of Turgot; and, on the other hand, he did not think that his ministerial supremacy would ever have any thing to fear from a philosopher as much a stranger to the court by tastes as by connections, and unsuited to those intrigues, which, to men like Maupepas, constitute the sum total of political science. The sensation produced by Turgot's appointment was lively indeed among the lettered classes, but slight among the populace of Paris, who knew little of the intendant of Limoges. The King and Queen were none the less coldly received in the first visit which they made during the interval to Paris. Maupeou and Terrai were still in office: the exile of the ex-magistrates had not yet ceased, and bread was still dear.

¹ Limousin and part of Angoumois.

² He had wished to remain in Limousin, in order to establish there the *tariffed villain-tax*, in conformity with the royal declaration which he had obtained December 30, 1761. — See *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. I. p. 486.

Maupeou decided, and decided the King. Without a fixed course, without a system, and ready to try any thing according to circumstances, there was nothing in the aged minister that could lead him to resist the least pressure of public opinion. August 24, Maupeou received orders to restore the seals, which were intrusted to Hue de Miromesnil, formerly first president of that parliament of Rouen which had contended so energetically against despotism. He was, personally, a man of little value as to capacity and morality: his chief recommendation was his relationship to Maurepas. Terrai was dismissed the same day. Turgot was transferred from the marine to the comptroller-generalship, the post to which he was called by the wishes of enlightened men. The aged Quesnai had the joy, before his death,¹ of seeing this illustrious adept of his school in possession of the ministry of finance. Madame de Maurepas, who governed her husband as her husband governed the King, caused the marine to be given to the lieutenant-general of police, Sartine. She made a less happy choice this time than when she had suffered herself to be guided by the con-disciple of Turgot, the Abbé de Véri. Sartine, an able chief of police, and the author of various material improvements in Paris,² but compromised by his disgraceful complaisance in the infamous deeds of Louis XV., brought nothing to the government but a spirit of arbitrariness and corruption, and had, moreover, no aptitude for the noble ministry that was intrusted to him, as was but too well experienced.

Maupeou and Terrai, it must be admitted, met their fall in very different attitudes. Maupeou, who had introduced himself into power by cringing, had begun to lift his head as soon as he believed himself strengthened. He endured disgrace with unexpected pride. "I have caused the King to win a great suit," he said. "He wishes to call again in question what has been decided: he is at liberty to do so." He refused to resign his irremovable office of chancellor, and never made an effort to reappear at court.³ Terrai did not preserve this haughty bearing in his fall. The King compelled him to restore a bonus of four hundred and fifty thousand francs which he had exacted on the recent renewal

¹ He died December 16, 1774.

² He had introduced street-lamps in 1766, in the place of the old-fashioned lanterns of La Reine, by means of a voluntary subscription among the property-holders. The Corn Market and the Free School of Design also date from his administration; but so do the official recognition and taxation of gaming-houses.

³ He did not die until 1792, at the age of seventy-eight.

of the lease of the farms, an abuse already of long standing, and which ceased at the accession of Turgot. Terrai was constrained besides to refund a sum of nearly equal amount for the works which he had caused to be executed at the expense of the State, near his château of La Motte.¹ He would not have been released at this price if the people had been consulted.

The fall of the two ministers was celebrated indeed, at Paris and elsewhere, with demonstrations, the violence of which called to mind and presaged times very different from the gentleness of the prevailing manners. Maupeou and Terrai were hung in effigy on Mount Sainte-Geneviève, and Terrai narrowly escaped being thrown into the river in person while crossing the Seine in a ferry-boat at Choisy. The pupils at the Cours-la-Reine caused a manikin in the chancellor's gown to be drawn and quartered by four donkeys. For several evenings, the clerks of the *basoche* (the jurisdiction of the solicitors of the parliament of Paris) mingled with the people from the Cité, sang, shouted, and discharged rockets, under the windows of the first president of the Maupeou parliament. The archers charged with guarding the Palais attempting to oppose them, they fell on the former, put them to flight, and beat an exempt to death in the public square.

The statesman who wished to spare France the era of vengeance which the resentment of the populace foreboded had commenced his laborious ministry.

August 24, the same day that he was called to replace Terrai, Turgot, immediately after an interview with the King, summed up in writing the propositions which he had laid before Louis XVI., in order to fix them in the memory of the youthful monarch, and which were as follows: There should be no bankruptcies; no increase of taxes, and no loans. In times of peace, the government should not borrow except to liquidate old debts, or to redeem other loans at a more onerous rate of interest. The expenditure of twenty millions over and above the receipts should be reduced at any price. The leaders of the other departments should be obliged to concert with the minister of finance concerning the expenditures of their ministries, and to discuss these expenditures with him in

¹ There were large storehouses in this place, on the shores of the Seine, which were let to the Malisset Company.

² *Merc. hist.*, t. CLXXVII. p. 330; *Mém. sur l'administration de l'abbé Terrai*, p. 230; Droz, t. I. p. 139. A writing of the times (*Journal historique*) was not afraid to jest on the name of this unfortunate, who was called Bouteille: "The bottle (bouteille) is broken." This savored already of the jests on the *lamp-post*.

the King's presence. There should be no more direct or indirect favors concerning the taxes, no more gratuitous interests in the farms, and no more privileged shares (*croupes*) or free patents. Economy was the necessary preface to reforms, which, without greatly lessening the public revenues, would relieve the people *by the improvement of agriculture, by the abolition of the abuses in the collection of the taxes, and by the more equitable apportionment of these taxes.* It was necessary to begin by shaking off the supremacy of the financiers.

"I do not ask his Majesty to accept my principles without examining them; . . . but, when he has perceived their justice and necessity, I entreat him to maintain their execution with firmness, without suffering himself to be dismayed by the clamors which it is impossible to avoid. I shall be alone in contending against abuses of all kinds; against the host of prejudices which are opposed to all reformation, and which are so powerful an instrument in the hands of men interested in perpetuating the disorder. I shall have to struggle against the natural goodness and generosity of his Majesty and of those who are dearest to him. I shall be feared, and even hated, by the greater part of the court. All refusals will be laid to my charge. I shall be depicted as a harsh man, because I have represented to his Majesty that he should not enrich even those whom he loves at the expense of the subsistence of his people. Those people to whom I shall have sacrificed myself are so easily deceived, that perchance I shall incur their hatred by the very measures which I take in their defence. I shall be calumniated, and perhaps with sufficient probability to deprive me of the confidence of his Majesty."

He concluded by calling to mind that the King affectionately pressed his hands in his own as if to accept his devotion. "His Majesty will remember that it is on the faith of his promises that I undertake a burden perchance beyond my strength; and that it is to him personally, to the upright, just, and good man, rather than to the King, that I abandon myself."¹

Louis, at once touched and subjugated by the accent of virtue and the authority of a great character, renewed the pledge to support his minister; and Turgot entered with a firm tread upon the career, all the perils of which he had so well measured with his eye. He had set forth to the King, to use his own words, only the *preface* of the work which he meditated: he deferred unfolding his full plan to Louis until after a first series of im-

¹ *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 165.

portant reforms had cleared the ground for the construction of the new edifice. The analysis previously given¹ of his theories, and of those of his friends the economists, has already shown his ideas on the questions of taxation and labor: the final aim of these, at least, was a single and direct tax, and the unlimited freedom of commerce and manufactures. As to the administrative, political, and social institutions, the necessary means, not only of establishing or maintaining economic reforms, but of attaining a still higher end, — the development of popular patriotism, morality, and intelligence, — we possess a plan written in conformity with his ideas, and under his eyes, by one of his intimate friends (Dupont de Nemours, according to all appearances), entitled *Memorial to the King on the Municipalities*. This modest title covers a complete constitution of the kingdom.

The spirit of the eighteenth century was found entire in the beginning of this memorial. Turgot, or his interpreter, clearly opposed reason to tradition, right to facts. The point in question was, not to know what was or what had been, but what should be. This was not for science, but for the conscience, to decide. "The rights of men united in society are not founded on history, but on their nature." It was necessary to throw aside the diversity of the existing forms in order to establish a uniform organization based on the rights and the interests of all. Turgot set forth with great clearness the reasons why there was no public spirit in France: "The evil arises from the fact, that the nation has no constitution." It was a nation, the members of which had very few social ties among themselves: scarcely any one was acquainted with his duties, or his legal relations to the other members of the State. Men waited for special orders from the King on every occasion; and the King was obliged to issue commands concerning every thing, even those things which it was impossible for him to know, both to himself and to his ministers, and to the delegates of his ministers. Individuals having neither guarantees nor definite functions in the State, and not being accustomed to regard themselves as active members thereof, considered themselves, on the contrary, as if at war with the State, and sought each to escape his share of the taxation.² The government had

¹ See *ante*, pp. 177-178.

² From this arose the fatal habit of unscrupulously deceiving the treasury, — a habit which still exists, and which renders so difficult the assessment of the tax on personal property, nevertheless, very just. The habit of expecting every thing from the State has likewise survived our seventy years of revolution. The evils denounced by Turgot were deeply rooted.

systematically stifled public spirit in the germ by forbidding the rural communes to join together for the purpose of executing the public works in which they were interested.

The point in question was to find forms and institutions according to which the greater part of the things that were to be done would be done of themselves (that is, by the citizens), without the necessity of the King's coöperation, otherwise than by the general protection which he owed his subjects.

It was the plan of these institutions which the author set forth, — institutions calculated to attach individuals to their families, families to their village or town, towns and villages to the *arrondissement*, arrondissements to the provinces, and provinces to the State.

1. The basis of the whole edifice was a council of national instruction. There were methods and institutions for training geometricians, physicists, and painters: there were none for training citizens. The council should cause standard works to be written, in which the study of the duties of the citizen should be the foundation of all others. Religious instruction (given by the clergy) was not sufficient as to the morality to be observed among citizens. Each parish should have its schoolmaster commissioned to teach this morality; and the same spirit should be introduced into institutions of all grades (education, therefore, was alone in question: instruction was only the means, and education the end). In ten years, the nation would not be recognizable.

2. It was unnecessary to wait for this result in order to pass to the second part of the plan; that is, to begin to transform into true municipalities the existing villages, — mere assemblages of cabins and of inhabitants, as passive as their wretched abodes. The objects of the municipal administration of the villages should be, 1st, The apportionment of the taxes; 2d, The public works and the cross-roads; 3d, The superintendence of the poor and their relief; 4th, The relations of the commune with the neighboring villages and with the *arrondissement* as to the public works, and the transmission of the wishes of the commune in this respect to the proper authority. The terrier and the equitable apportionment of the taxes would thus be made of themselves. The public works of the communes would serve to give employment to the poor during the dull season.

The voting system was derived from the physiocratic principle, that the earth alone is productive. The owners of the soil, in conformity with this principle, should alone be called upon to

regulate the economic interests of society. They should vote in proportion to their estates. In this manner the earth would be represented, and not the man. The electorship of Turgot on this point is merely the transformation, instead of the abolition, of the feudal principle.¹ It must not, however, be forgotten, that, according to Turgot, rights are inseparable from burdens, and that the land-holders alone were to bear these burdens, and to bear them all. He discloses this final aim here to the King, and shows him at the end of the course the abolition of the special taxes weighing upon the *roturiers* alone, and of the taxes on consumption, for which a direct tax was to be substituted. There would be, therefore, in future, but a single class of voters, as there would be but a single class of tax-payers. As to the present, when the apportionment of the villain-tax was in question, the privileged persons were to vote with those subject to this tax, in proportion to their estates which were farmed out, and were subject to this tax on cultivation,² deducting the estates which they worked themselves and which were exempt. The nobles were to vote with the *roturiers* concerning the apportionment of the twentieths; the ecclesiastics were to vote with the nobles and the *roturiers* concerning the public works, the relief of the poor, and the apportionment of the imposts which the King might establish in the place of the indirect taxes: that is, whoever voted was to pay a direct tax, and was to vote in proportion to what he paid.³ These complications might be simplified afterwards (by arriving at a single tax).

The assemblies of villages should appoint a mayor or president, and a recorder.

8. Analogous institutions in the towns should replace the existing municipalities, petty republics with a selfish local spirit, unconnected either with each other or with the State, and tyrannical to the rural districts about them, as well as to their own industrial and commercial laborers. In the towns, the owners of

¹ However much we may differ from the physiocrats on this point, it is just to admit a difference between the national and the municipal right of suffrage. Admitting that, in a normally constituted and fully developed community, every citizen should participate in the general interests of the State, it is not so evident that every citizen that finds himself temporarily in a commune, without having any vested interests therein, and who may quit it to-morrow, should participate in the affairs of this commune. Conditions of time and residence may be admissible here, if not of property.

² He designed to lay the villain-tax on estates cultivated by *roturiers* upon the owners of the land at the end of the existing leases.

³ The laboring-men of the rural districts were to be freed from the villain-tax.

houses alone should vote in proportion to the value of their estates. The towns, having interests more complicated than the villages, should elect municipal officers charged with the administration, and responsible to the electors: in the large cities, there should be a magistrate of police appointed by the King. They should be subdivided into district assemblies. The *octrois* of the towns should be abolished; the debts contracted by the towns on the King's account should be paid by the King, and those contracted for the benefit of the towns should be paid by the land-holders by annuities. Assistance at home should be substituted for the assistance given in the hospitals. The public granaries should be abolished, and the provisioning of the cities left to free trade.

4. The municipalities of the towns and villages should be under the jurisdiction, with respect to the interests and public works common to a certain extent of territory, of *arrondissement* municipalities composed of deputies from all the towns and villages. These municipalities of the second degree should also vote assistance to parishes afflicted by the scourges of nature, and should settle certain intestine disputes which might take place in the assemblies of the first degree.

5. The *arrondissement* municipalities should be under the jurisdiction, in turn, of provincial municipalities, composed of deputies appointed by the *arrondissement* assemblies: these assemblies of the third degree should be intrusted with the provincial interests, and should succor the calamities which exceeded the powers of the *arrondissements*.

6. Above the provincial municipalities, lastly, should tower the great municipality, or the general municipality of the kingdom, formed of deputies elected by the provincial assemblies, and the highest limit of all the hierarchy. The ministers should have a seat and voice therein. The King, at the opening of the session, should give notice, either in person or through his minister of finance, of the sums which he would need for the expenses of the State, and of the public works which he might see fit to order; and should leave the assembly at liberty to add such other works as it might desire, and to grant to the suffering provinces the aid which it might deem necessary. The assembly should express its wishes on whatever subjects might seem good to it.

The deputies to the provincial and national municipalities should be indemnified.

Here is found a theory of assistance to all classes, from the individual to the province.

Each one should, as far as possible, provide for his own wants by his own energies. The individual who was able to work, and could find work to do, needed to ask aid from no one. If necessities overtook him which really exceeded his powers, he should address himself to those nearest to him, his relatives and friends, before having recourse to any other assistance; and his relatives and friends should not be authorized to call upon the public until they had themselves done all they could in his behalf. This course should be followed, from the simple private individual to provinces soliciting benefactions from the State (that is, the municipality afflicted by a blight, a murrain, etc., should first ask assistance from the municipalities with which it was in habitual intercourse; after which the latter should recommend it to the arrondissement, and so on).

The rural municipalities should be constituted first, then the urban municipalities a month later; and, three or four months after, a great edict should be issued concerning the complete hierarchy of the municipalities.

Turgot had at first hoped that a year's ministry would suffice to prepare for the realization of his project: he then postponed it for another year, until the autumn of 1776, in order to have time to pave the way by laws in favor of the laboring-classes, and to revise and rewrite the work edited by his friend, and at the same time to complete it by plans of laws fully securing individual freedom, and the freedom of commerce and manufactures, before submitting it to the King. These laws were for the benefit of the classes who were strangers to real estate and to the rights which were designed for the land-holders.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the greatness of this plan. As to the singular combination which led a spiritualistic philosopher to propose a materialistic electoral system,—as to the point most at variance with the ideas of civic right established by Rousseau, it is important to remark that Turgot was separated from democracy by an economic error alone. Had he admitted, as every one does at the present time, the *productiveness* of all useful labor, he would have finally recognized, at least virtually, the political right of every citizen; for the economic school acknowledged the principle of property in the arm of the laborer as well as in the soil of the land-owner, and made no difference except in the productiveness.

Moreover, even on this point, it must not be forgotten that the substitution for the despotism of the intendants and farmers-

general, and the pecuniary privileges of the nobility, the clergy, and all others exempt from burdens, of the administration of the economic interests of the country by the entire class of landed proprietors, was an immense progress. There is reason to believe, however, that the landed proprietors would soon have deemed this political privilege too dearly purchased by the obligation to bear the whole weight of the taxation.

All that was erroneous or questionable in the plans of Turgot came from others, — from the school of which he was a member: all that was beautiful, true, and profound therein belonged to him exclusively, with the exception of the great idea of public instruction laid down as the basis of society; an idea, the glory of which he shared with all the physiocratic school, or rather with all the eighteenth century. To him, indeed, belonged the idea of a nation animated everywhere by a uniform impulse, public life awakened in every degree of the territorial scale, and that beautiful theory of assistance which preserves in the poor the dignity of the man and the citizen by assimilating individual poverty to collective poverty, and by applying the same principle to the succor granted to private individuals as to the succor granted to a community. This, indeed, was true solidarity, true social fraternity, conceived by the great apostle of individuality. The reason was, that in him individuality meant liberty, and not selfishness. To him belonged the honor of having sought to combine federalism with unity, — unity without the bureaucratic concentration which was stifling, and which still stifles, France. What progress since the plans of D'Argenson, who saw only royalty and the commune, and nothing between the two!¹ Here the communes were at once independent in their private interests, and firmly allied to the State in an ascending scale with respect to the common interests. The King, the central power, retained the final decision in affairs of the State: but the assemblies of different degrees were sovereign in the affairs of the commune, the arrondissement, and the province, and were at liberty to propose measures concerning the affairs of the State; the King reserving the right of accomplishing the reforms which he deemed necessary, even though they might not be proposed by the assembly.

Did Turgot think that the power of proposing would be transformed in time into the power of deliberating, and that the great municipality, sharing the legislative power with the King, would become a unitary national assembly, substituted for the ancient

¹ See vol. I. p. 324.

form of the Three Estates? Was his final aim something similar to the attempt of '91? We do not believe this. Turgot did not approve of mixed governments. He was by no means confined in theory to the hereditary power of a single man, like his friends the physiocrats: but he desired the unity of the central power, whether monarchical or republican; a king, or an assembly; not a King or an elective executive power on one hand, and one or two assemblies on the other. He did not desire, at the summit of the State, that distinction of powers recommended by Montesquieu and Rousseau. Too confiding in human reason, he did not see, as we have already said, how difficult or rather impossible it is to reconcile this formidable confusion of the legislative and the executive powers with the liberty which he loved above every thing.

Had he been called upon to constitute a State *à priori*, his plan would not have been far removed from a unitary republic: but, in point of fact, he was the minister of a King; and this should not be forgotten. If he did not desire an assembly participating in the legislative power, by much greater reason he was averse to the idea of recalling the States-General. Should they return such as they had been, it would be a step backwards, a new sanction of the existence of the privileged orders, of the social order of the Middle Ages: should they become any thing different, it would be a revolution. He desired neither the one nor the other. He desired the abolition of privileges and the establishment of social unity by means of reform. He desired reform through royalty, and could desire nothing else. This is the significance of his name in history.¹

From the moment that he was summoned to the comptroller-generalship, Turgot lost not a day, not an hour, in hastening the moment, so earnestly desired, when he could unveil his full thought to Louis XVI. He began by taking an account of the state of the receipts and expenditures. He found the gross revenue for 1775 amounting to three hundred and seventy-seven millions; the net revenue, the expenses deducted, to two hundred and thirteen and a half millions; the expenditures of the royal treasury, to two hundred and thirty-five millions; and the deficit,

¹ See *Mémoire au roi*, ap. *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. 502. J. Reynaud has summed up with great force and clearness the ideas and philosophical and political labors of Turgot, in the article TURGOT, of the *Encyclopédie nouvelle*. — See also the *Éloge de Turgot*, by H. Baudrillart; a conscientious study, written from the stand-point of the present economic school, and crowned by the French Academy.

to twenty-one and a half millions; which he did not hesitate to increase to thirty-six and a half millions by adding to the expenditures fifteen millions for the diminution of the arrears and debt due, which, since Terrai's bankruptcy, already amounted to two hundred and thirty-five millions.¹ At the same time, he abolished the office of banker to the King, thus burning his ships with respect to the revenue-farmers. He laid down the principle, that, save in case of absolute impossibility, all the expenditures should be made in ready money, thereby effecting a saving in commissions of six millions annually to the State. Louis seconded him by giving a sum from his privy purse to the treasury for the payment of one year's arrears of the pensions of the war-department, the marine, and the King's household. Louis seemed to seek to purify that purse, so often filled under his grandfather, with money wrung from the famine of the people.

September 13, 1774, a decree of the council reëstablished the entire freedom of the grain-trade within the kingdom; revoked the restrictive regulations² renewed by Terrai, December 23, 1770; abolished all purchasing and storing in behalf of the State and the municipalities, thus cutting short the operations of the association of the *Pact of Famine*; and encouraged the importation of foreign grain. The exposition of his motives, addressed to the public judgment by Turgot, was an eloquent manifesto in favor of commercial freedom. Among the motives alleged against the interference of the State in the grain-trade may be remarked the unequivocal acknowledgment of the possibility that the government might be unwittingly betrayed by its agents into *culpable manœuvres*. Turgot had been compelled, in the end, to believe in the existence of monopolies. The decree of the council of September 13, 1774, while signalizing the revival of the economic impulse arrested in 1770, did not exceed the bounds of prudence: the declaration of 1763 alone was reëstablished, and not that of 1764; and the King postponed the freedom of sale outside of the kingdom until circumstances should have become more favorable.

A few weeks after (November 2), letters-patent announced that the King reserved to himself the right of prescribing the regulations peculiar to the city of Paris. The harvest having again been

¹ *Comptes rendus des finances*, 1758-1787, p. 126, *et. seq.*; *Mercurie historique*, t. CLXXVII. p. 407 (October, 1774).

² These regulations compelled the dealers in grain to register at the police-office their names, their residences, the places of their storehouses, and the contracts relative to their operations; and forbade the sale of grain outside the markets.

unsatisfactory, the danger was feared of the moral effect of immediately closing the public granaries in this city.

A ministerial letter of September 14 had apprised the farmers-general that no more *croupes* or favored shares in the profits of the farms would thenceforth be granted to persons outside of and useless to the administration. The place of farmer-general was in future to be given only to persons who had satisfactorily filled the higher posts in the farms for a number of years. The farmers were also apprised, that, in disputes relative to the taxes, the benefit of the doubt would be given to the tax-payers, contrary to the monstrous jurisprudence which the system of farming had brought into use. September 15, a decree of the council abolished the duty of eight sous per livre, added by Terrai in 1771 to all the royal and seigniorial toll-dues, and which was a source of intolerable vexation. Another decree, of September 25, annulled the lease of the farm of the domains, alienated for thirty years by Terrai to a few of his creatures, on conditions disastrous to the State, and equivalent to an absolute fraud. The indirect taxes were collected by the government, instead of being farmed out. The lease of the administration of the mortgages suffered the same fate.¹

A great political question, raised by the very fact of the accession of Louis XVI., meanwhile was daily becoming more urgent, — the question of the magistracy. Scarcely had Turgot entered actively upon the comptroller-generalship, when the King found himself compelled to decide between the old parliaments and the Maupeou parliaments. The solution necessarily preceded the reopening of the courts after the judicial vacation. The King hesitated long, — a hesitation very excusable, it must be admitted. The solution was full of embarrassments and perils. Turgot, on his side, did not hesitate. From his youth, he had been opposed to the parliaments; and, convinced that the courts were wanting in their duty in suspending the course of justice, he had not feared to brave public opinion by sitting as master of requests in the *royal chamber* of 1753, during the exile of the parliament of Paris. He had always regarded the participation of the courts in politics and legislation as an evil and a source of anarchy; and absolutely refused to see therein a lawful guarantee against arbitrariness and fiscal oppression, — guarantees, as we have seen, which he designed to seek elsewhere. He proposed to transfer the registration of

¹ E. Daire, *Notice hist. sur Turgot*, ap. *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. I. p. 89; *Anciennes Loix françaises*, t. XXIII. passim; *Merc. historique*, t. CLXXVII. pp. 402, 595.





Duke of Provence, afterwards Louis XVIII

the laws and the right of remonstrance to the *great municipality of the kingdom*, and to reduce the superior courts to simple judicial functions. He was not only opposed in theory to the parliamentary pretensions; he was well acquainted with the stationary spirit of the ancient magistracy: he knew that their interests as land-holders had alone been able to render a portion of the magistrates favorable to the freedom of the grain-trade, but that in every other respect they were as much opposed to good as to evil, to reforms as to exactions, and that every innovation would have them for its adversaries. He contended energetically, therefore, against the reëstablishment of the old parliaments; and, by the strangest caprice of events, Turgot, Voltaire, the economists, and the most political among the philosophers, found themselves involuntarily in unison on this ground with the party of the clergy and the old courtiers of despotism, the aunts and the eldest of the King's brothers, and the remains of the cabal of D'Aiguillon and Du Barri. It is unnecessary to tell what a difference existed in the aim and the motives of these allies of a day.

The minister of foreign affairs Vergennes, the partisan of absolute monarchy, then the eldest of the King's brothers, *Monsieur*, successively presented several memorials to the King, conjuring him not to disavow his grandfather's victory, and place the crown again under tutelage. The Queen, the young Count d'Artois, whom she governed at that time, the princes, and all the party of Choiseul at court, cast the weight of their influence in the opposite direction. They would not have succeeded in turning the scale had not the current of public opinion set the same way. There was a delicate distinction to be established between Maupeou and his work, the cause and the effect. These distinctions are seldom made by the public: it never has but a single idea at the same time, and does not separate the acts from the actors. The prevailing idea at that moment was a reaction against despotism. The parliaments had opposed despotism; therefore it was necessary to recall the parliaments. Calas, La Barre, the vendibility of office, the judges' fees, and so many other well-founded grievances, all were forgotten! It must be admitted that it would have been very difficult to retain the members of the new magistracy, who had fallen into such disrepute; and, if they were not retained, the question was how to replace them, the capable and honest members of the bar being for the most part pledged in honor to the old parliaments.

These practical difficulties, which will and perseverance would

have doubtless surmounted, had less influence upon the frivolous Mentor of Louis XVI. than the desire of being applauded at the Opera. When Maurepas was certain that the current of the day set in favor of the old magistracy, he followed the current. Louis XVI., against his instinct, followed Maurepas. This was the second great mistake of his reign.

Louis strove to reassure Turgot by repeating to him that he might count on his firm support, and strove to persuade himself that the parliaments were no longer to be feared, after the precautions which had been taken to curb them. The unconditional reëstablishment of the old tribunals was not, in fact, what Maurepas had advised. In conformity with a plan suggested by the keeper of the seals, Miromesnil, he had proposed to recall the former members, but to force upon them the régime of Maupeou, with little difference. Letters-patent, therefore, officially recalled from exile all the ex-members of the parliament of Paris, and requested them to appear at the Palais in their ceremonial robes on November 12, the day of the annual opening of the term. The King repaired thither in great state to hold a bed of justice, escorted by all the princes and peers, among whom was remarked Conti, who reappeared for the first time at court. Louis harangued the *returned* parliamentarians in harsh terms:—

“The King, my most honored lord and grandfather, . . . compelled by your resistance to his reiterated orders, did what the maintenance of his authority and the obligation to render justice to his subjects exacted of his wisdom. . . . I recall you to-day to the functions which you should never have quitted. Feel the value of my goodness, and never forget it.”

He concluded by announcing that he wished to bury all the past in forgetfulness, but that he would never suffer derogation from the ordinance which was about to be read.

The keeper of the seals then read several edicts which reëstablished the former officers of the parliament of Paris; abolished the new posts; reëstablished the Great Council, and reorganized it from the members of the Maupeou parliament; abolished the superior councils, while increasing the former attributes of the presidial courts, in order to retain a part of the advantages which the creation of the superior councils had offered to those amenable to the tribunals; reëstablished the courts of aids at Paris and Clermont-Ferrand; reëstablished the community of attorneys, etc. These edicts were accompanied with the ordinance announced by the King, which regulated the discipline of the parliament. The

two chambers of requests, the usual hot-beds of the parliamentary storms, were abolished. The assemblies of the chambers could only be convoked by the decision of the Great Chamber, and at a time not interfering with the ordinary functions, which must never be interrupted. All interruption of functions, and all resignation of members in a body, would be considered as forfeiture of office, and would be judged under this name by the King, in *plenary court*, in the presence of the peers and his council: the Great Council, in this case, would, by full right, replace the rebellious parliament. The power of remonstrance was continued; but, in the case of a negative answer and of a registration effected in the presence of the King, nothing was to suspend the execution of the royal will.¹

Vain precautions, vain restrictions! The spirit of fraternity is immutable, and never wearies of taking up the broken links of its traditions. It was quite certain that the parliament would recommence its enterprises. Already a smothered murmur had run through its seats during the reading of the disciplinary ordinance. The official orators, in replying to the King, had maintained all the previous positions; and the Duke de Chartres, eagerly seizing an occasion for popularity, had made a kind of protest when the keeper of the seals went through the formality of taking the voices. December 9, the parliament convoked the princes and peers for the purpose of deliberating on the remonstrances, which were voted in a second session by all present, except the King's brothers, the Count de La Marche, and six peers, among others the Archbishop of Paris. The Duke de La Rochefoucauld demanded the States-General, the place of which, he said, the court of peers had not the right to fill. On quitting the Palais, the Dukes of Orleans and Chartres, and the Prince de Conti, were greeted with the acclamations of the populace. The King's brothers were received with chilling silence. The Archbishop of Paris was hooted. Nevertheless, on the negative answer of the King, the parliament did not reiterate the remonstrances, but contented itself with placing upon its registers a protest against the form of the bed of justice, and against whatever might be introduced to the prejudice of the laws, maxims, and usages of the kingdom. The Prince de Conti himself advised it to stop at this; but Maurepas and Miromesnil were secretly wrought upon, and, nine months after the bed of justice, the ordinance which was *never to be derogated from* was already

¹ *Anciennes Loix françaises*, t. XXIII. pp. 43, 86.

impaired by the reëstablishment of the two chambers of requests.¹

All the provincial courts, and the Châtelet of Paris, were successively reëstablished in the course of a year, to the great joy of the people, who saw in this only a victory of the spirit of liberty.² The restoration of the venerable La Chalotais to the head of the bar of Rennes, was, above all, a day of rejoicing, both to Brittany and to all France. The exile of this man, so justly popular, had ceased almost immediately after the accession of Louis XVI. Had the spirit of La Chalotais, indeed, been that of the parliaments, the public joy would have been wholly legitimate, and Turgot would not have refused to participate therein.

The foreboding of the obstacles which this return of the parliaments complicated in so formidable a manner only redoubled the energetic activity of Turgot. Several important measures followed each other from the end of 1774 to the spring of 1775. January 2, 1775, exemption from the duties of registration, the hundredth penny, franc-fief, and other dues, was granted to all leases of lands for twenty-nine years. A declaration of January 3, 1775, abolished proceedings against the principal inhabitants of parishes for the recovery of the villain-taxes, as being jointly responsible for their payment. This iniquitous joint responsibility, copied from the fiscal laws of the Roman empire, rendered a few farm-laborers, in better circumstances than the rest, responsible for the taxes of the whole parish in the provinces where the villain-tax was assessed on personal property, prevented them from ever knowing what they were to pay to the treasury, and annually ruined a great number of hard-working families. No law had probably been more detrimental to the progress of agriculture. Excellent provisions were made to arrest a murrain which was devastating the south. Vicq-d'Azyr, the most eminent of the disciples of Buffon, was appointed commissioner for the government. Various entry dues of the kingdom and of Paris, chiefly on the sea-fishery, were abolished, reduced, or equalized. The Hôtel-Dieu had the monopoly of the sale of meat during Lent: the freedom of this was granted to the ordinary dealers. Two chairs were instituted

¹ Droz, *Hist. de Louis XVI.*, t. I. pp. 155-158; *Merc. historique*, t. CLXXVII. p. 633, t. CLXXVIII. pp. 113, 226; *Anciennes Loix françaises*, t. XXIII. pp. 119, 134.

² The parliament of Rouen had been reinstalled simultaneously with that of Paris: those of Rennes and Douai were reëstablished in December, 1774; those of Bordeaux and Toulouse, in February, 1775; that of Dijon, in March; that of Grenoble, in April; of Metz, in September; of Pau, in October. — *Anciennes Loix françaises*, t. XXIII. p. 43.

in the College of France, — one for the law of nature and of nations, the other for French literature. A clinical school was founded, under the inspiration of Vicq-d'Azyr. The Royal Society (Academy) of Medicine was authorized, despite the opposition of the spirit of routine of the old Faculty. In March, 1775, Turgot commissioned D'Alembert, the Abbé Bossut, the celebrated mathematician,¹ and a man destined to great renown, Condorcet, already perpetual secretary of the Academy of Sciences, to make theoretical and experimental investigations concerning the canal system of the kingdom.² The three commissioners, worthy of the minister, accepted the task only on condition that their services should be gratuitous. A decree of the council, of April 23, exempted foreign books from all duties.

The influence of Turgot made itself felt even in the matters most foreign to finance. The year before his accession to the ministry, he had addressed, as intendant, a memorial to the minister of war against the abuses of the militia system, which had just been modified since the fall of Choiseul. Turgot's idea was to organize provincial standing regiments, from which men should never be drafted, as was arbitrarily done with the militia, for the purpose of incorporating them into the active army; to make annual levies in all the parishes; and to leave the militiamen at home on half-pay, assembling them each year for a time sufficient to train them to discipline and the use of arms. This would have been a true army of reserve.³ He permitted the employment of substitutes. An ordinance of December 1, 1774,

A chair of hydro-dynamics was founded for him in September, 1775. In March, 1776, the opening of a course of lectures on comparative anatomy, the most fruitful of the natural sciences, took place.

¹ A most admirable work, the prototype of all those artificial subterranean works now so numerous in France, had been recently commenced by the engineer Laurent. This was the subterranean Canal of St. Quentin, designed to unite the basins of the Somme and the Scheldt, and consequently (the Somme being already joined to the Oise by the Canal of La Fère) to put Paris in communication with the Netherlands. The subterranean canal was much larger in Laurent's plans than it was finally constructed: it was to be seven thousand toises in length. Laurent had formerly canalized the Somme, and rendered this river navigable through all the upper part of its course. — *Mém. secrets de Bachaumont*, t. VII., p. 281.

² *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 115. The prohibition of substitutes has often been demanded in the name of equality and civic duty. We believe that there is a confusion of terms in this. When the country is in danger, and the soil is invaded, every citizen owes his personal service; but, so long as the system of standing armies continues, to interdict the employment of substitutes for the ordinary service of these armies would have immense objections. The employment of substitutes is incompatible only with the principle of the national guard, the army of the nation.

without following the whole of Turgot's plan, took from it its best features. Thirty provincial regiments, formed by conscription from among all the unmarried men, and widowers without children, between the ages of eighteen and forty, numbered from sixty-six to sixty-seven thousand men. The term of service was six years. The employment of substitutes was authorized. All exemption from conscription of nobles, ecclesiastics, functionaries, and employés of every kind and rank, royal, seigniorial, and municipal, members of the bar and their clerks, physicians and surgeons, agriculturists, and certain categories of manufacturers and traders, was continued. The sons of the higher functionaries, and even the valets of nobles, churchmen, and other privileged persons, were exempt! That this audacious privilege was retained and sanctioned in the presence of Turgot's ministry, tells the whole story concerning the strength and depth of the social iniquities which were to be destroyed.¹

Those who lived by these iniquities, those who were attached to abuses by interest or vanity, understood that an enemy was in power. The great projects of Turgot transpired. He already had against him the parliaments, who had not forgotten his opposition to their reestablishment; the clergy, who were indignant at seeing philosophy invade the counsels of the crown; the farmers-general, who saw the dawn of the system of the direct administration of the taxes by the government, and the abolition of the excise duties; the courtiers, interested in the *croupes*² and other financial privileges about to be abolished; and the whole body of the courtiers and the officers of the King's household, who were in the enjoyment of the privileged pensions, sinécures, and perquisites, threatened with destruction. The whole ancient régime began to league together against the reformer, who had not even all the philosophical party in his favor, on account of the quarrel between the economists and a part of the encyclopedists. The latter loved and honored the minister, but did not support him unreservedly. The grain question was a cause of rupture. The dearness continued without reaching dearth, and smothered murmurs were agitating the country. On this subject, an attack on

¹ *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. p. 87.

² We have the list of the *croupes* or shares in the profits of the farms granted to personages of the court by the last lease of the time of Louis XV. The Dauphiness (Marie-Antoinette), and Mesdames the daughters of Louis XV., are inscribed therein by the side of the girls of the *Paro-aux-Cerfs*!—See *Mém. sur l'administration de l'abbé Terrai*, p. 241.

Turgot came, not from the camp of the retrogressive party, but from one of the principal philosophical drawing-rooms of Paris. The brilliant sortie of Galiani against the physiocrats was repeated by another friend of philosophy, who shared the religious opinions of Rousseau and Turgot, but who, in political economy, had already taken his stand with éclat as the defender of the traditions of Colbert.

In the beginning of the spring of 1775, the banker Necker, the former champion of the Indian Company,¹ and the author of the *Eulogy of Colbert*, presented himself at the comptroller-generalship with a manuscript in his hand. This was a treatise upon the *Legislation on Grain*, based on different principles from those of the minister, and greatly lauded in advance in Paris. Necker came to invite Turgot to assure himself with his own eyes whether the book could be published without injury to the government. Turgot, with somewhat disdainful haughtiness, replied that the government *was afraid of nothing*; that the book, be it what it might, could appear; and that the public should be the judge. Necker withdrew with equal pride, and the book was published.²

The haughtiness was misplaced here. This was Turgot's fault, — a fault which proceeded from a conviction intolerant through force of energy and sincerity: nevertheless, this administration, disarming itself, and opening the lists to its adversaries in the presence of the judgment of public reason, presented a great spectacle and a great example.

Turgot had not to encounter a contemptible rival. Less witty and less ingenious than Galiani, Necker was more impassioned and more moving: his sentimental eloquence, though bordering at times on bombast and affectation, was well adapted to produce a lively impression. No common thinker would have relied for support upon the strongest feature of the past, the recollections of Colbert, while looking beyond the reforms announced by the economists, to predict the new ills that would mingle with the blessings of free trade, and protesting in the name of the lower classes, the

¹ Since the fall of the Indian Company, Necker had been engaged in extensive financial operations with the government. The following singular passage is found in a letter addressed to Necker by the bureaux under the Abbé Terrai: "We supplicate you to assist us in the course of the day. *Deign* to come to our aid. . . . We have recourse to your love for the reputation of the royal treasury." — Droz, *Histoire de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 216. We see from this incident, as M. Droz remarks, not only into what distress, but what *turpitude*, the government had fallen, at the very moment when it laid claim to a despotism more absolute than that of Louis XIV.

² *Mém. de Morellet*, t. I.

poor and the weak, against the abandonment of all interference of the State in economic phenomena. The ardor with which this book has been decried and celebrated, even in our day, suffices to attest its importance. With respect to grain, the whole science of political economy was at stake. Necker blamed Turgot less for what he did than for what he wished to do. The first part, which treated of exportation, expressed views which were often of great justice. He maintained therein, in opposition to the school of Quesnai, that population contributes more than wealth to the power of a State; that the constant and absolute freedom of the exportation of grain is not necessary to the progress of agriculture; and that the establishment of manufactures is the only means of raising the consumption to a level with the highest cultivation. He went so far as to affirm that the constant freedom to export grain is injurious to manufactures. He established a distinction between the interests of the owners of grain and the encouragement necessary to agriculture. He proclaimed the superiority of the interchange of national and foreign manufactures over that of grain. Turgot, carried away by physiocratic logic, had written somewhere,¹ that "the territory does not belong to the nation, but to the individual proprietors of the lands." Necker thought more justly, that the territory belongs both to the nation and to the landed proprietors; that there are two rights to be harmonized; and, consequently, that the right of the proprietor to dispose of the fruits of his land, and his land itself, is not unlimited.² It is the duty of the State, according to him, to protect the strong against the weak: now, "the strong man, in society, is the proprietor; the weak man is the man without property." Ere long, carried away in turn by his theory, he evoked glowing images, and raised up formidable problems. He compared the landed proprietors and the lower classes to lions and defenceless animals living together in a community. "It would seem as if a few men, after dividing the earth among themselves, made laws as a union and guarantee against the multitude, as they would have built up a barricade in the forest to defend themselves against wild beasts. Nevertheless, we dare affirm, that after having established laws of property, justice, and liberty, they have done almost nothing as yet for the most numerous class of

¹ *Lettre au docteur Price*, 1778; *Œuv. de Turgot*, t. II. p. 808.

² With respect to the disposal of the ground, an example may easily be cited: The State has a right to forbid the owner to sell his land to a foreigner; that is, to alienate a portion of the national soil to any one that is not a citizen.

citizens. 'Of what importance are your laws of property to us?' the latter might say: 'we possess nothing. Your laws of justice?—we have nothing to defend. Your laws of liberty?—if we do not work to-morrow, we shall die!'"

It would be easy to show how important these well-defined laws are to all. Necker, however, summed up his theory in less oratorical, more philosophical, and calmer language: "It is necessary, while granting to the prerogatives of property as much as possible, never to lose sight of the prior claims of humanity."

His practical conclusions relative to the grain question were to permit exportation only when grain was below a fixed price, which should be reëstablished every ten years; to prescribe that there should be a moderate supply in the hands of the bakers from the 1st of February to the 1st of June of each year,—that is, during the months when it was most liable to rise in price; to leave the internal commerce free so long as the price of grain was not half as high again as that at which exportation was prohibited; and, above this price, to forbid its sale outside of the markets, and to prohibit its purchase in the markets themselves for the purpose of storing. His objections against all internal free trade had not the same value as those against absolute free exportation, and the expedients proposed by him were more than questionable. His hostility to the grain merchants was without foundation: the interference of the grain merchants, in a normal state of affairs, does not, in general, make provisions dearer, but equalizes the price.¹

In short, Necker, like Galiani, was right in disputing economical absoluteness. Dangerous hyperboles have been censured in his book; and, even in his time, one of the partisans of Turgot, the illustrious Condorcet, replied to him, that it was not the liberty of the land-owner, but the monopoly of the privileged trader, which oppressed the non-landowner.² It is certain, that, of the two, the greater oppressor was the monopolizer; which did not prove Necker wholly in the wrong. The inequality of property was much greater then than now, and the legislation which we owe to the movement of '89 had not yet diminished

¹ See Necker, *de la Législation des grains*, ap. *Mélanges économiques*, t. I. collect. Guillaumin.

² Condorcet, *Lettre sur le commerce des grains*; ap. *Mélanges économiques*, t. II. p. 491. "It is," he says, "the abuse of credit, privilege, and arbitrariness, and not the right of property, that constitutes the fatal power of the rich against the poor. The question is to secure this same right of property to the poor."

the force of the accumulation of property. Necker's injustice consisted in imputing to his adversaries a pretended absolute denial of the duties of the State. These men, who wished to organize public instruction on an immense scale, did not deny social duty; but they knew that the best, the only means of freeing the lower classes from wretchedness is to free them from ignorance and vice, and that the first of all economic laws is a good law of instruction. Neither did Turgot and his friends deny, as we have already said, and are about again to show, that the State should labor to relieve the poor in hard times; but they designed to reconcile this interference with liberty. In Necker, it must be confessed, the protest in behalf of the lower classes did not go beyond sentiment: he had no general plan for their protection; for it was not a plan to invoke the traditions of Colbert,—traditions which Colbert himself, could he have revived, would have thoroughly transformed.

In Turgot, behind every idea, there was an act: in Necker, the idea knew not how to take form. The one in power was a great statesman: the other would be only an able financier, and, when he attempted any thing beyond combinations of credit, would only resume a few fragments, here and there, of the plan of his predecessor.

The time, meanwhile, had come for thought to emerge from the sphere of generalities: the questions that had been agitated in books were beginning to make themselves felt among men; the era of peaceful discussion was about to close. At the moment of the appearance of Necker's book, seditious murmurs were heard on every side.

The dearness had increased towards spring, as is always the case in bad seasons. The irritation of the suffering classes was in proportion to the very hopes which had been given by the new reign. The people paid little heed to the obstacles opposed by Nature to the good intentions of the government. April 18, a mob of peasants invaded the town of Dijon; attacked the house of a parliamentary counsellor, Maupeou, well known for his connection with the *Pact of Famine*; sacked every thing, without pillaging any thing; and sought to kill the governor, M. de La Tour-du-Pin, who, it was said, had exasperated them by a speech as insane as barbarous. On being told by the peasants that they had not wherewithal to buy bread,—“My friends,” he answered, “the grass is beginning to shoot: go and browse.” The Bishop

of Dijon succeeded at last in calming the exasperated crowd, and arresting the disorder.¹

At the news of the disturbances in Brittany, Turgot caused the *octroi* and market dues on grain and flour to be suspended in the towns of Dijon, Beaune, Saint-Jean-de-Lône, and Montbard, in consideration of an indemnity to the proprietors of these duties. It was only the beginning of a series of analogous measures, which, from April 22 to June 3, ended in the abolition or the very great reduction of all duties of this kind throughout France, except at Paris, which remained temporarily subject to a special régime. This was one of the best means of lowering the price of grain. April 24, another decree of the council granted premiums for the introduction of foreign grain. It is seen from this decree that the government increased the public works in all the provinces where the necessities were urgent; and that workshops for weaving, knitting, etc., were established at Paris, where men, women, and children were employed. The government cannot, therefore, be reproached with inaction. As early as before the decree of April 25, Turgot had furnished funds to merchants for the importation of grain by the way of Havre.²

The agitation meanwhile continued, and assumed a character, in the provinces around Paris which serve as its granaries, wholly different from the riot of Dijon, — a riot easily explained by ordinary causes. In Brie, Soissonnais, Upper Normandy, and Vexin, bands of sinister-looking men scoured the country, inciting the populace to insurrection, forcing the farmers to sell grain at a low price, attacking the markets of the towns, and moving from point to point along the Seine, as if following a signal, and as if their principal aim was to prevent the foreign grain landed at Havre from reaching Paris. It appears certain that barns were burned and the grain thrown into the river by men who were crying famine! May 1, the bands pillaged the market of Pontoise; May 2, they effected their entrance into the court-yard of the château of Versailles itself! The King appeared on the balcony, and addressed them. They refused to listen. He became agitated, and caused it to be proclaimed that the price of bread should be fixed at two

¹ Letter from Dijon, quoted in the *Relation* appended to the *Mém. sur l'administ. de Terrai*, p. 256.

² *Anciennes Loix françaises*, t. XXIII. pp. 151, 155; *Relation* appended to the *Mém. sur l'administ. de Terrai*, p. 257. In the preamble of the decree of April 24, the ministry explained why bread was dear; upon which, malicious persons did not fail to say that it approved of the dearness.

sous a pound. The vociferations ceased, and the tumult was dispelled; but the bands publicly announced that they should go the next day to Paris.

Turgot hastened from Paris, in despair at a weakness which threatened to render any plan of administration impossible. He forced the King in some sort to retract the concession made to the mob, and to authorize him to prohibit all persons from exacting bread from the bakers below the market price; but Louis at least insisted on forbidding the troops to fire. Meanwhile, the bands entered Paris (May 3). The markets were guarded; but this was not the case with the shops of the bakers, which were pillaged by the rioters at their leisure, in the presence of an immense multitude, less accomplices than spectators. The police showed more than weakness: the lieutenant-general of police, Lenoir, like the minister Sartine, whom he had succeeded, was extremely hostile to Turgot's system, and very desirous of witnessing its failure. The energy of Turgot equalled the occasion. He demanded the immediate removal of the lieutenant-general of police. May 4, the bakers' shops were occupied by a military force: the movements of the troops drove away the curious spectators; and the sedition, reduced to its real strength, dared attempt nothing more at Paris. The parliament, meanwhile, had assembled, in spite of a letter from the King forbidding it to meet as a body during these disturbances, the cognizance of which the council attributed to the Tournelle, and issued a decree, claiming the jurisdiction of the affair for the Great Chamber, and entreating the King to lower the price of grain to a rate proportioned to the necessities of the people. Such a decree, placarded opposite the royal ordinance maintaining the market price of bread, was, if not a great act of perfidy, at least very perilous. If Paris was tranquillized, the disorder was redoubled in the rural districts and the small towns; and several large cities, Lille, Amiens, and Auxerre, had been a prey to the same disturbances as the capital, and on the same day.¹ The rumor of the imprudent concession granted by the King at Versailles spread with the rapidity of lightning. A great number of forged decrees of the council, confirmatory of the King's promise, were circulated, of which the populace took advantage to exact bread, flour, and grain at a low price: at the same time, the bandits continued to burst the sacks of flour, and to attack the boats on the rivers; and unknown agents secretly induced

¹ The south also had its riots about the same epoch.

the principal holders of grain to conceal instead of selling it, in the expectation of a further increase of price.

The council adopted all the resolutions dictated by Turgot. The distribution of the decree of the parliament was stopped, and the plates were broken at the printers. A small army of twenty-five thousand men was put on a war footing, and occupied the capital, the Isle of France, and especially the course of the rivers. This was commanded by a marshal of France (Biron), under the superior direction of the comptroller-general, appointed *minister of war in this matter*. A royal ordinance prohibited all men, under penalty of death, from collecting together, forcing the houses of the bakers or the grain and flour stores, and compelling the holders to give them grain and flour below the market price; and announced that orders had been given to the troops to fire in case of violence, and that the offenders would be tried before the prevotal court,—rigorous measures, which Louis XVI. did not sign without a kind of dismay.¹ May 5, the parliament was summoned to Versailles for a bed of justice. The keeper of the seals explained to the parliament the motives which induced the King to charge a summary jurisdiction, a jurisdiction of war, with the repression of the disturbances: “When the first disturbances are entirely appeased, the King will leave to his courts and ordinary tribunals, as soon as he deems proper, the care of discovering the real culprits; *those who may have given rise, by secret intrigues, to the excesses*, which, at this moment, it must be thought only of quelling.”

When the keeper of the seals went through the formality of taking the votes, the Prince de Conti and a parliamentary counsellor alone dared manifest their opposition. The King dismissed the assembly, forbidding it to make any remonstrances. “I rely on your putting no obstacle or delay in the way of the measures which I have taken, *in order that no event like those of the past may take place in the course of my reign!*”

The parliament felt the consequences that would ensue from its resistance in such a juncture, and dared not incur the responsibility of them. By interfering inopportunely in the question of fixing the price of bread, it had deprived itself of the possibility of defending its legitimate ground, the ordinary course of justice, against an exceptional jurisdiction. It was not sorry, at heart, to see the unpopular task of repression thrown on others: it protested only in order to save appearances, and remained tranquil while

¹ His Majesty said to M. Turgot on going out, “At least, have we nothing for which to reproach ourselves?” — *Relation* appended to *Mém. sur Terrai*, p. 264.

the minister acted.¹ The energetic measures employed by Turgot were completely successful: the riot nowhere became an insurrection, the rioters did not attempt to make any serious stand against the troops, and the security of the highways and markets was reëstablished. The agents of the administration had secretly informed the large farmers that it did not design to fix the price of their grain arbitrarily, but that they must keep the markets stocked, and not exact exorbitant prices. The arrival of foreign grain, besides, began naturally to arrest the rise.² The news of the imprisonment of two of the principal agents of the *Pact of Famine*, as the presumed movers of the sedition, also contributed to win the favor of public opinion. Many men of divers conditions had been arrested, among others several country curés, who had declaimed in the pulpit against the comptroller-general. It was thought necessary to make examples. May 11, two of the actors in the riot of the 3d were hung on the Grève by the order of the prevotal commission of Paris,—a journeyman gauze-maker and a peruke-maker, who, without being innocent, were not more guilty than many others, and who could not be considered as belonging to the number of those *plotters* denounced by the keeper of the seals. Their death may be styled the first application, by the progressive party, of that *salutary rigor*, and those *necessities of the public safety*, of which such a terrible abuse was afterwards made. This is, perhaps, the only reproach which can justly be made to Turgot.

The capital punishments, at least, went no farther. On the same day of the execution of these unfortunates, an amnesty, which excepted only the leaders and instigators, reassured the peasants, who had taken refuge by crowds in the forests, and guaranteed them against all ulterior prosecution, on condition of returning peaceably to their parishes, and restoring in money or kind the real value of the grain and flour pillaged or extorted below the market price.³ At the same time, the council addressed to the curés, through the medium of the bishops, a circular, to be read and commented upon from the sacred desk. This was at

¹ The parliament, meanwhile, displayed an unexpected monarchical zeal: it ordered two pamphlets against absolute power, in which the principles of the *Social Contract* were blended with those of the *Parliamentary Remonstrances*, to be burned (June 30). The parliament pretended that it did not belong to writers to treat of these matters.—Droz, t. I. p. 171.

² The ministry expended ten millions therein.

³ Indemnities had already been allowed the pillaged proprietors by the government.

once an exposition of the causes which naturally raise and lower the price of grain, and a manifesto against the authors of the plot formed to famish Paris and the neighboring provinces. The ministry affirmed in this document that the sedition had not been occasioned by the real scarcity of grain, of which there had always been a sufficient quantity in the markets; that neither had it been produced by excessive want; and that provisions had been seen much higher in price,¹ without occasioning the slightest murmur. His Majesty had neither the power nor the will to lower the price of provisions at his pleasure: this price was entirely dependent on their scarcity or abundance. . . . The wisdom of the government might render the dearth less rigorous by facilitating the importation of foreign grain; by permitting the free transit, throughout the kingdom, of indigenous grain; by rendering the means of subsistence more nearly equal to the necessities by facilitating the transportation and sale; by giving to the destitute; and by increasing in their behalf all the resources of an industrious charity: but all these precautions could not prevent the recurrence of high prices, . . . the necessary consequence of bad harvests. *When the people know who were the authors of the sedition, it was said in conclusion, it will see them with horror.*

This phrase, which seemed to announce that the storm was about to burst on culprits high in rank, did not belong to Turgot, but to the Archbishop of Toulouse, Loménie de Brienne, an innovating and ambitious prelate, who had been intrusted with the revision of the circular, and who made a great noise in the hope of arriving at the council.

The circular was ill received by the clergy, who were angry that a *philosopher* like Turgot should interfere with prescribing to them their duties. Many censured the government for having denounced a plot which was not proved. In fact, Saurin and Doumercq, the two agents of the royal monopoly of grain under Louis XV. and Terrai, who had been arrested, succeeded in exculpating themselves; a president of the ex-superior council of Rouen (a Maupeou parliament), likewise imprisoned, was also released; the curés arrested were acquitted with a few months' imprisonment; and the renowned sentence of the circular "remained an idle threat," says the historian of Louis XVI., "either because the disturbances had no secret instigator, because it was impossible to collect sufficient proof against the criminals, or be-

¹ Grain had been much dearer in the time of Terrai and the *Pact of Famine*.

cause Louis XVI. did not permit their publication."¹ It is certain that Turgot was convinced of the existence of a conspiracy plotted by the Prince de Conti and certain members of the parliament. Conti, that philosopher-prince, and adversary of despotism, deplorably ended a career, which had been honorable at moments, by putting himself at the head of all the cabals in opposition to the philosophy which had arrived at power under other auspices than his own. Many suspicions were also raised against the minister, Sartine. It cannot be doubted that there had been, if not a formal and organized plot, at least a treacherously systematic propagation of all the rumors that could act as incitements to sedition, and that money had been liberally expended to encourage it.² There was in this *Flour War*, as these disturbances were styled, a monstrous coalition of opposing elements: the agents and the victims of the Pact of Famine acted in concert; the passions of the populace mingled with the most retrogressive passions; and a blind and violent faction of the people served the partisans of the monopoly and despotism which they thought themselves combating, against the friend of the people. They fancied that the monopoly was still at Versailles, as in the times of Louis XV. From this idea proceeded those furious placards, posted even in the Tuileries, inciting the populace to burn Versailles. The insane defenders of the old abuses and the old régime smiled instead of trembling: they saw in it only an embarrassment to their adversary, a means of overthrowing Turgot!³

Turgot did not fall. Material order was reestablished; but this was not enough. The middle classes had taken these grave incidents lightly: influenced indirectly by the aristocracy, their natural adversary, and by the fraction of the encyclopedists, who, with very little political intelligence, grouped around Turgot in opposition to Necker, they did not give the government all the moral support which it had a right to expect from them. The

¹ Droz, t. I. p. 167. Farther on, p. 168, this conscientious historian decides fully to admit that "men in power incited the disturbances."

² The following incident is among those best vouched for: During the session of the parliament, on the 4th of May, a counsellor related, that, seeing a woman more excited than the rest during the tumult of the night before, he had urged her to retire from the fray, offering her a crown to buy bread; upon which the fury answered him ironically, clinking her pocket, "Begone! we do not need your money: we have more than you!" — *Relation* appended to the *Mém. sur Terrai*, p. 265.

³ Concerning the *Flour War*, see the *Relation* appended to the *Mém. sur l'administ. de Terrai*; *Mercur hist.*, t. CLXXIX. p. 48, *et seq.*; *Journal des Économistes*, t. X. p. 279; *Soulavie, Mém. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. III; Droz, t. I. p. 164, *et seq.*

revenue-farmers, who had sent so many thousand wretches to the galleys or the scaffold for the crime of smuggling, audaciously clamored against Turgot's *barbarity*. Pamphlets, caricatures, and ballads multiplied, and were received by the public, if not with decided favor, at least with too much indulgence. Voltaire showed admirable good sense and energy. He, who had lately ridiculed the exaggerations and eccentricities of the economists, did not hesitate for an instant to acknowledge that here their cause was that of philosophy and progress, and gloriously purified himself from his connivance with Maupeou and Du Barri¹ by the devoted coöperation which he gave to Turgot. Already, in the ingenious allegory of the *Voyage of Reason*, the memorial of a fleeting alliance between the European monarchies and philosophy, he had congratulated the French government on meriting in its turn the praises due to its brethren, the late Pope at the head: it is true that this was the Pope that had abolished the order of the Jesuits. Two more of his writings, immediately accosting the question of the day, the free transit of grain within the kingdom, diffused over these grave, economic subjects all the grace and piquancy of inimitable talent, and indirectly refuted Necker, and directly a dangerous ally of Necker, — the advocate Linguet, the incarnation of paradox; the apologist of Tiberius, of Nero, of slavery, of the Jesuits, and of pure despotism; the sole protector, according to him, of the poor against the oppression of the rich; an easy writer, who was not without vigor, and who was misled by the love of noise and the pursuit of a false originality. Voltaire, according to his custom, touched on every thing relating to the times; and the second of his two writings, the *Diatribes in the Style of the Author of the Ephemerides*, was suppressed by decree of the council, August 19, on account of certain passages concerning the part played by the clergy in the late disturbances. Turgot entreated Voltaire to moderate the expression of his sympathies, for the interest of the cause. The old man, nevertheless, continued to celebrate the political Messiah of philosophy, and to labor to convert hesitating minds to his side.²

¹ A connivance, the motives of which were perfectly disinterested, it must not be forgotten.

² See the *Ode on the Past and Present*: —

Contemplate the brilliant dawn
Which at last announces happy days.
A new world is about to break forth:
Até disappears forever.
Behold august Philosophy,

Every day, some new incident showed more clearly how far the least progress would be disputed. The period of the coronation arrived (July 11, 1775). For reasons of economy, Turgot would have gladly caused this ceremony to be celebrated at Paris. The coronation at Rheims involved an expenditure of eight millions. Tradition prevailed: the rights of Rheims were maintained. Turgot strove—a thing more important—to cause the coronation oath to be modified, and the two formulas, the one ancient, the other modern, by which the King pledged himself to *exterminate* heretics, and to maintain the capital penalty against duellists, to be suppressed. Maurepas dissuaded the King from this innovation, and Louis XVI. dared not follow Turgot's advice.¹ It is said, that, at the moment of pronouncing the barbarous oath of the Middle Ages, Louis became confused, and stammered unintelligible words. Unhappy prince, incapable of clearly deciding which side to take in the conflict between the past and the future!

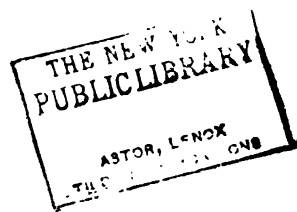
It was the clergy, on the contrary, that modified the coronation oath, and deprived it of all that could be accepted by the modern spirit! While the recollections of the Frankish kings and the feudal kings, the Holy Ampulla of Clovis, the crown and sword of Charlemagne, and the peers of Hugues Capet and Philippe-Auguste, were once more exhumed in the presence of the eighteenth century, the people were expelled from the place preserved for them by tradition in the ritual, as a protest which prevented the primordial right from falling into disuse. The officiating prelate (the coadjutor of the Archbishop of Rheims) suppressed the question to the people, "Will you take N—— for your King?" The men of the past themselves destroyed the compromise between divine right and national sovereignty which was concealed in the antique ceremonial.²

On his return from the coronation, Turgot addressed to the King an excellent memorial on *tolerance*, in which he affirmed

So long pursued within thy bounds,
Dictating its triumphant laws!
Truth comes with it, etc.
... What gods diffuse these blessings?
A single man! yet the vulgar
Disregard the good that he has done!

¹ Turgot, as regarded the coronation, was successful only in the economic question. Instead of causing Rheims to be supplied by the government, he left the task of provisioning it to free trade, contenting himself with suspending the *octrois* of the city. There was an abundance of every thing.

² Droz, t. I. p. 171; *Œuv. de Turgot*, t. I.; *Notice hist.*, p. c.; *Relation du sacre*, ap. *Mercurie hist.*, t. CLXXIX. p. 78, et seq.





Gezard

Egerton.

JEANNE YRELAND.

that it is a duty not to keep criminal engagements ; and demanded the liberty of worship in the name of reasons of State, natural right, and true religious principle.¹

Meanwhile, the assembly of the clergy, in session from July to September, 1775, petitioned that the work of Louis the Great and *Louis the Well-beloved* should be completed ; that the meetings of the Protestants, tolerated by a fatal laxity, should be dispersed ; that they should be excluded from all public functions ; and that the celebration of their marriages and the instruction of their children should be interdicted. The clergy complained that children were left to their mothers, which it called "*ravishing* tender infants from the ministers of our holy religion." Upon the protests of the mendicant orders, who complained of seeing their novitiates deserted, it petitioned that the monastic vows, deferred to the age of twenty-one by the ordinance of 1708, should be authorized at sixteen, as before. Lastly, in its anger with the age, after condemning a great number of philosophic publications, it declared that "monstrous Atheism had become the prevailing opinion."²

These mournful complaints of the spirit of persecution were carried to the King by the Archbishop of Vienne, the brother of the poet Lefranc de Pompignan, and his ally in the war against Voltaire. This prelate, who was sincere in his intolerance, had as acolytes the Archbishop of Toulouse, Loménie de Brienne, the minister in expectancy, and a young prelate destined to become far more famous, — the Abbé de TALLEYRAND-PÉRIGORD ; two churchmen, who, at the most, believed in God, but who, at all events, had endeavored to oppose in private the resolutions which they were obliged to sustain officially.

This retrogressive assembly had nevertheless refused to authorize the feast of the *Sacred Heart of Jesus*, which the ex-Jesuits were striving to introduce through the secret society of the *Cordicoles*. This was a concession to the anti-Jesuitical spirit of the parliament, which responded to the advances of the clergy by condemning to the flames the *Diatribes in the Style of the Author of the Ephemerides*, already prohibited by the council. The advocate-general Séguier proclaimed, in his address to the court, the close alliance between the magistracy and the clergy. The two old adversaries united against the common enemy.³

¹ *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 492.

² Dros, t. I. p. 182 ; Bachaumont, t. VIII. pp. 269-312.

³ *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. VIII. p. 241 ; Dros, t. I. p. 183 ; E. Daire, *Introduction aux Œuvres de Turgot*, p. xcix.

Other remonstrances, conceived in a very different spirit, had been presented to the King before those of the clergy (May 6, 1775). These were the remonstrances of the court of aids, which have so justly remained celebrated as the most instructive historical document that emanated from the body of the magistracy. The court of aids, or rather its first president, the excellent Malesherbes, seized the occasion of a few observations on the conditions of its reëstablishment to draw a complete picture of the system of taxation which was oppressing France, and the frightful abuses which resulted from it. The King was enabled to embrace every thing at a glance, the past and the present. In these remonstrances are seen those thrilling and often-quoted details concerning the tax on salt; on that gift "which would be one of the most precious bestowed by Nature upon France, did not the hand of the financier constantly repulse this boon which the sea unceasingly casts upon our shores. . . . There are places where the clerks of the farmers assemble the peasants at certain seasons of the year for the purpose of again submerging the salt which the waves have deposited on the strand." In these remonstrances also appears unveiled the demoralization caused by the system of internal custom duties and unequal taxes, a demoralization of which fearful traces remain. The author shows the people accustomed to regard smuggling, that is, defrauding the State, as a venial offence.¹ "There are whole provinces in which children are brought up to it by their fathers, having never learned any other trade, and knowing no other means of subsistence." And this with the galleys, and even the gibbet, in perspective! The farmers-general combated this species of corruption by another still worse: they secretly bribed the wife to inform against the husband, and the son against the father. They had obtained provisions which made accusation almost equivalent to condemnation: it was not necessary to prove the offence; the official report of the clerks being admitted as evidence, the accused was called upon to prove his innocence; and Heaven knows what faith could be put in clerks interested in finding every one guilty.² In most cases, the accused had but a

¹ Witness the kind of popularity of Mandrin, the smuggler-hero.

² See in the *Recueil de la cour des aides*, p. 485, *et seq.*, the story of Monnerat, suspected of smuggling (he had been mistaken for another), who was arrested, and buried in a subterranean dungeon for six weeks, without form of justice, loaded with irons, and fed on bread and water, then kept for twenty months in another prison. The error was perceived, and he was set at liberty; upon which he obtained damages from the court of aids against the lessee of the farm. The council of State called up and

single judge, the greater part of the cases concerning the taxes having been taken from the special tribunals, and referred to the intendant of the generality, and from him, in case of appeal, to the council of finance, that is, to an intendant of finance; since the comptroller-general, who composed the council with this intendant, could not enter into the details of the affairs in litigation. Even when there was no evocation, the appeals from the tribunals still ended in this single judge from the council of finance. To have but a single judge *is to have no judge*, — to be judged arbitrarily. The concession made to the court of aids in 1767, by the abolition of extraordinary commissions, had been, therefore, almost entirely illusory.

The insolent tyranny which the farmer-general and all his employés, even to the lowest, exercised over the laboring masses, and over all who were not privileged or protected, reposed upon an unknown code, a vast chaos of regulations which had never been collected together, and which were accessible to the financiers alone. The tax-payer never knew what he ought to pay; the farmer-general often knew no better what he ought to exact: but it had become customary in jurisprudence always to interpret the doubt in favor of the latter. "The common people are daily obliged to endure the caprices, disdain, and even insults, of the agents of the farmer-general." They were wholly at the mercy of fiscal tyrants, as they had formerly been at that of fendal tyrants.

How can we be astonished at the traditional hatred which to this day pursues every thing that pertains to the indirect taxes?

"Whole branches of the administration are founded on systems of injustice, from which no recourse, either to the public or to superior authority, is possible." Neither was there more clearness and equity where the direct taxes were concerned. The *corvée*, for example, had been established by no law, not even by a printed decree of the council! Not only had the King attributed to himself the exclusive and absolute right of making laws, but now taxes were sometimes levied even without a law of the King. The twentieth had, indeed, been established by edicts; but the lists were secret, and it was impossible for private individuals to consult them. The court of aids, in 1756, had obtained the publication of these lists; but the late King had been induced by the ministers to revoke this concession. As to the villain-tax and its accessories, the lists could not be

dismissed the case, and quashed the decrees by which the court of aids endeavored to maintain its jurisdiction and to do justice. This is one instance among a thousand.

secret; but no means existed, either for communities or private individuals, to discuss or protest against them in advance. No one was informed of what he owed until the moment of payment. The court of aids, in 1768, had ordered each fiscal election district to send it an annual statement of the villain-taxes. The council quashed the decree of the court. All guarantees were swallowed up one after another in a vast quagmire of arbitrary power. The *élus* (assessors) charged with the department of the villain-taxes had formerly been delegates from the people, as was indicated by their name: they had been made royal officers: then had been presided over by the intendant of the generality; then the sole power of decision had been given to the intendant, the *élus* being reduced to the simple right of deliberating without voting, and the sovereign courts had received a prohibition to interfere in questions concerning the assessment of the taxes; then, lastly, in 1767, the *élus* were deprived of the cognizance of whatever concerned the accessories of the villain-tax; that is, the variable part of the tax,—a part almost equal to the principal, which remained stationary; the intendant not only decreeing alone, but having the sole cognizance thenceforth with respect to the accessories of the villain-tax, and also to the abatements and remissions.

The court of aids did not discuss the limits of the rights of the crown, as the parliaments had continually done: it laid aside all political metaphysics,¹ and concentrated its attack, in order to render it irresistible. The enemy with which it grappled in close combat was *bureaucratic*² despotism,—was the clandestine, impersonal, and irresponsible power of the clerks. In a large majority of the cases which interested the greater part of the citizens, it was not, in fact, the minister, or even the intendant, but an obscure inferior, who decided with full sovereignty, under cover of the signature of his superior. The court of aids

¹ A passage of very acute and remarkable discernment must nevertheless be cited. The writer draws a comparison between France and the countries of Oriental despotism in which there are neither laws nor organized bodies, and also the countries where the prerogatives of the prince and the nation have been respectively fixed. "In France," he says, "the nation has always had a profound feeling of its rights and liberty: our maxims have been more than once recognized by our kings, who have even boasted of being the sovereigns of a free people. Nevertheless, the code of this liberty has never been written." — *Recueil de ce qui s'est passé à la cour des aides*, etc.; Brussels, 1779, p. 652. Institutions and official facts do not, indeed, constitute the whole of history, but also manners and ideas. This must not, above all, be forgotten in the history of France; for we are the least *formal* of nations.

² The term is *barbarous*, but expressive, and we can find no equivalent for it.

vehemently attacked this arbitrary and clandestine system, followed perseveringly by the administration for the purpose of depriving all ranks of the people of the means of reaching the ear of the Prince, — this system which had caused the disappearance, throughout nearly all France, of all general or local representation; which had gone so far as to despoil corporations and communities of the right of managing their own affairs; and which had reached such a *puerile excess* of universal concentration as to “declare the deliberations of the inhabitants of a village null and void, when they had not been authorized by the intendant: so that, if this community wished to make any expenditure, however trifling it might be, it was necessary to obtain the consent of the sub-delegate of the intendant.”

After seventy years of revolution, the communes are not yet freed; but we see at least what is to be thought of the reproach so often made to the Revolution,¹ of having crushed the communal liberties.

In assailing everywhere the system of clandestineness, the court of aids could not fail to encounter the *lettres de cachet*. It would have gladly demanded their entire abolition: it at least petitioned that men arrested by extraordinary proceedings should be given the means of arguing their innocence, with an indemnity if they were found innocent; and that every extraordinary writ of arrest should be reëxamined by special magistrates.

The *Remonstrances* endeavored everywhere to point out the remedy by the side of the evil. The duties and taxes should be simplified: “Simple laws are the only good laws.” The farmers-general should be ordered to publish exact tariffs, and a brief and clear collection of the regulations. The right of appointing representatives to sit in the department of taxes with the intendant and the existing *élus* should be restored to the people, and every thing relating to the direct taxes should be referred to this assembly. The capitation-tax should be abolished, or its arbitrary nature wholly changed.² A period should be fixed for the expiration of the twentieth, greatly increased under the Abbé

¹ That administrative centralization, with all its abuses, is of monarchical, instead of revolutionary origin, is the conclusion that arises from an attentive study of the ancient régime. M. de Tocqueville has rendered us the service of placing this truth above discussion, and within the comprehension of all, by collecting and concentrating the proofs of it in a decisive work, *l'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, the last effort of a noble intellect which death was about to snatch from us.

² The nobles and all the privileged persons in the provinces had found means of reducing their capitation-tax to an excessively moderate rate, while that of those subject

Terrai: meanwhile the nature of this tax should be changed by a terrier which should be made. There should be no more taxes, the sum total of which had not been fixed in advance. Private individuals should be required to pay their proportional share of a fixed sum, and not a fixed portion of their revenue, making a part of an indefinite total.¹

The court of aids concluded by demanding that every part of the administration should be made public. "It is the unanimous wish of the nation to obtain the States-General, or at least the Provincial Estates." It was necessary to begin by causing deputies to be sent to the King from all the provinces, for all their affairs in general, as was already done for the special interests of commerce; and to be able publicly to have recourse to the council or the minister against the intendants, as to sovereign courts against the lower tribunals.²

Malesherbes' conclusions differed from those of Turgot, since he demanded the States-General; and his plan of reform was much less extensive and less profound than that of the comptroller-general: but the official presentation in the name of a sovereign court gave it great weight; and the general impression made by the *Remonstrances*, despite certain divergences on various points, was very favorable to the plans of Turgot. The comptroller-general himself had urged the first president of the court of aids to hasten his work; and both were agreed in endeavoring to secure the appointment of a commission of magistrates and administrators to examine the *Remonstrances*, and to seek practical means of reform. This commission would have been the essential instrument of Turgot.

The aged Maurepas was conscious of this. The increased authority of Turgot was beginning, if not to disquiet, at least to annoy him. The harsh and gloomy picture drawn by Malesherbes startled him. He was unwilling to permit the gov-

to the villain-tax amounted to nearly as much as the principal of this tax. — *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 258.

¹ That is, there should be nothing but apportioned taxes, and no quota-tax.

² *Mém. pour servir à l'hist. du Droit public*, etc., or *Recueil de ce qui s'est passé en la cour des aides, de 1756 à 1775*, pp. 628–693. There are many judicious observations in this document, apart from its special object. The writer shows, for instance, that one of the causes which checked the growth of the prosperity and greatness of France was, that it was more profitable among us to be a clerk, or even a smuggler, than a soldier; an officer of finance, than an agriculturist; a trader, than a manufacturer. Forbonnais had affirmed the same thing, and had given statistics showing that the financier earned three times as much as the manufacturer.

ernment to pledge itself thoroughly to any thing. He thought only of stifling the *Remonstrances* and the plan of the commission ; and caused the King to reply, that the necessary reform of all matters susceptible of reformation would be, not the work of a moment, but the labor of his whole reign ; and the keeper of the seals, that, if *abuses really existed*, they should not be made known until the moment of correcting them, and that the court of aids must not therefore be astonished at the extraordinary means taken to prevent the publication of its *Remonstrances*. These means consisted in abstracting the minutes from the registers of the court (May 30, 1775). Maurepas did not gain much thereby ; for the document which he sought to suppress was printed secretly, a few weeks afterwards, without the knowledge of Malesherbes.¹

The presentation of the *Remonstrances* was the last important act of Malesherbes as the first president of the court of aids. Maurepas had at last perceived the impossibility of longer sustaining against universal contempt his brother-in-law, the aged La Vrillière, the disgraceful relic of a disgraceful régime. The Queen, instigated by her familiars, who were ambitious for her, strove to introduce some one of her protégés into the cabinet in the place of La Vrillière. Maurepas feared above every thing lest the Queen should gain influence : he went over to the side of Turgot, and caused the author of the *Remonstrances* himself to be appointed to the ministry of the King's household. Malesherbes twice refused, and did not consent to the change until Turgot had made acceptance a positive duty to him by representing that the spirit of frivolity and dissipation was about to invade the place which he refused, with the circle of the Queen, and that the cause of reform would be lost (the middle of July, 1775).

It was a very significant indication of the times to see in the ministry intrusted with the affairs of the clergy, and the *lettres de cachet*, the correspondent of Rousseau, the magistrate who had secretly revised the proof-sheets of *Émile*. The presence of this good man seemed to purify the bureaux filled for the last half-century with the infamous pander of Louis XV. and of all the great nobles, the servile instrument of vice and fanaticism. The first care of Malesherbes was to visit the State-prisons, and to liberate as many as he could of the victims of arbitrary power. It was impossible for him to liberate them all, or to cause those who

¹ *Recueil de ce qui s'est passé en la cour des aides*, pp. 694, 695 ; *Mémoires de Bachaumont*, t. VIII. p. 138

appeared guilty or dangerous to be brought to trial. The unfortunate Le Prévost de Beaumont, who had given information of the *Pact of Famine*, remained in prison. This fact alone shows the immense power of the machinery of despotism. The statesmen who desired the most sincerely to destroy it were caught and drawn into its wheels as soon as they arrived at power. Malesherbes himself signed a few *lettres de cachet*.¹ He proposed, in conformity with the *Remonstrances*, to refer to a special tribunal the fatal weapon of which he was in haste to rid himself. In case of arrest by the express command of the King, the case was to be brought before the new tribunal within twenty-four hours. Louis XVI. approved this; but Maurepas secretly opposed it, and the tribunal was not established.

It was the same with another monstrous abuse which Malesherbes had sought to render less crying. The point in question was the writs to stay proceedings, under cover of which the courtiers were in the habit of braving their creditors, and indefinitely postponing the payment of their debts. Malesherbes demanded that these writs should be granted only by a council, a species of tribunal; and that the debtors favored by them should be banished from the court and Paris so long as they enjoyed the benefit thereof. The King applauded; but nothing was done.²

Turgot, meanwhile, continued to advance through all these obstacles. He effaced the last vestiges of the depredations of Terrai. After the lease of the domains and the lease of the mortgages, he annulled the lease of gunpowder, and placed this again under the direct administration of the government. The illustrious chemist Lavoisier figured among the managers (the end of May). Efforts were made to replace by artificial nitre-beds the old, troublesome processes of the search for saltpetre in houses. Lavoisier improved gunpowder, and our armies had the benefit of it in the American War.

An edict of June, 1775, abolished the posts of privileged merchants, and carriers of grain, for the city of Rouen, and the right of banality belonging to this city, in consideration of an indemnity. The maintenance of these privileges had rendered the freedom of the grain-trade proclaimed by the government absolutely fallacious with respect to Rouen and the neighboring provinces. A company of one hundred and twelve merchants had the exclusive right

¹ And Turgot demanded them. — See *la Bastille dévoilée*.

² Droz, *Hist. de Louis XVI.*, t. I. pp. 178-180.

to purchase grain in the markets of Rouen, Andelis, Elbeuf, Duclair, and Caudebec, and to sell it again to bakers and to private individuals. Another company, of ninety carriers, loaders, and unloaders of grain, had the sole right of the transportation of the article. Lastly, the city of Rouen possessed five mills, enjoying the exclusive right of grinding for its inhabitants,—a right which resolved itself into an additional tax on the bakers. Under all the regulating shackles of the modern monarchy, France still wore the innumerable local fetters of the Middle Ages.¹

Some time after, a decree of the council permitted travelling bakers to bring and sell their bread without duties in the city of Lyons (November, 1775).

In August, 1775, commissioners were appointed to examine the titles of all seigniors and other proprietors of rights over grain,—a measure preparatory to the redemption of these rights.

The sinking-fund, founded in 1764, and disorganized by Terrai, was abolished (July 30). Other means of redemption were to be employed. Turgot was not opposed to the principle of gradual extinction; for he had just imposed it thenceforth on every corporation and community that might wish to contract a loan. The administrative disorders of the municipal and other corporations furnished but too good reasons for this measure (July 24).

A tax was established for the continuance of the canalization of Burgundy and Picardy (August 1).

August 7, a decree of the council joined the department of stage-coaches and diligences to the domains, and placed them under the direct administration of the government. The heavy coaches, running ten or eleven leagues a day, were replaced by lighter vehicles, with relays of post-horses on all the highways. A promise was made to put post-coaches on all the cross-roads, and it was explained that the administration by the State was only preparatory to a system of freedom. Turgot well understood what a powerful assistance the facilitation of travel and the increase of intercourse would give the cause of progress.²

August 18, Turgot and Malesherbes caused the council to render a decree, severely censuring a colonial tribunal, the superior

¹ A declaration of January 12, 1776, abolished another kind of shackles, which fettered the growth of the glass-works of Normandy. We learn from this document that the use of square panes of glass was substituted for that of lozenge-shaped panes about 1711. — *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. p. 29.

² *Œuv. de Turgot*, t. II. p. 424, and t. I.; *Notice*, etc., p. lxxxvii., on the hostility of the clergy to this arrangement. It took the Bordeaux coach or carriage a fortnight to reach Paris: the *turgotine* made the journey in five days and a half.

council of the Cape (the Island of St. Domingo), for having made use of intercepted letters as evidence, "considering that all principles place the correspondence of citizens among the number of the sacred things, from which tribunals, like private individuals, should avert their eyes; and that, therefore, the superior council should refrain from receiving the information which has been given it."¹

An edict of August, 1775, abolished the ancient alternate, triennial, and semi-triennial offices of receivers of the villain-taxes, in proportion as they should fall vacant, in consideration of the reimbursement of the families; and created a single and only receiver of all the direct taxes for each election district, bailiwick, *viguerie*, etc., in which the office of receiver existed. The simplification of the fiscal posts paved the way for the simplification of the taxes.

August 29, the military *corvée* (the *corvée* for the transportation of troops and military stores) was abolished, and replaced by a tax of twelve hundred thousand francs on the *pays d'élection* and the conquered countries. Turgot had set the example of the redemption of this *corvée* by subscription in his generality of Limoges,—an example followed by eight other intendants. The decree of the council applied the same principle to the greater part of the kingdom.

The entire freedom of the grain-trade was extended to the transportation from one port of the kingdom to another (October 12).

The higher police created or largely developed under Louis XV. was subjected to reformation.²

Letters-patent of December 22, 1775, freed the province of Gex from the salt-tax, the aids, and the tobacco monopoly, in consideration of a subscription paid by the landed proprietors, equivalent to the sum yielded by the farming of this little corner of the earth. This amounted to only thirty thousand livres, which cost the province probably ten times as much, through the vexations, the disorders, and the obstacles to agriculture. It was a delicate testimony of gratitude to Voltaire to begin the experiment, at the gates of Ferney, of the plans of the minister whom he supported with so much zeal.³ The indefatigable pen of the

¹ *Anciennes Loix françaises*, t. XXIII. p. 229. The decree prescribed that those who had intercepted the correspondence should be prosecuted with the utmost rigor of the law.

² *Mémoires de Bachaumont*, t. VIII. p. 236.

³ *Mercuré hist.*, t. CLXXX. p. 338.

patriarch continued to produce writing after writing in favor of the present government.

The reformatory spirit had conquered a third place in the cabinet. The minister of war, the Marshal de Mui, had just died. The choice of a successor was embarrassing. Turgot and Malesherbes proposed to Maurepas, still governed by the anxiety to ward off the protégés of the Queen, an old general officer who was living in retirement and poverty in a village of Alsace. This was the Count de Saint-Germain, one of the few generals, who, in the Seven-Years' War, had sustained with Chevert the honor of the French arms. Sundry grievances, exaggerated by his ardent imagination, had caused him to quit the army in the midst of the war; after which he had gone into the service of Denmark, reorganized the Danish army on a new plan, then abandoned this country after the fall of his unfortunate protectors, Struensée and Caroline Matilda. Ruined by a bankruptcy, he retired to Alsace, where he was living on a moderate pension, dividing his time between the cultivation of his garden, the writing of papers on the organization of the army, and the exercises of a mystical piety into which he had fallen in his old age.

Maurepas saw an element of popularity in the piquancy and unexpectedness of such a choice. He would not have suffered a third adept of philosophy to enter the council; but he thought that Saint-Germain, a reformer, without being a philosopher, would not make common cause with Malesherbes and Turgot, although owing his place to their recommendation. Saint-Germain was therefore summoned to Versailles; and it was related with admiration, in the city and at court, that the envoy who carried him his appointment to the ministry had found him busied in planting his vegetables with his own hands. The public, seized with a sudden infatuation for this new Cincinnatus, forgot that the old hero of Rome did not quit the army in time of war for private grievances.

Be this as it may, the choice was good as to designs. Saint-Germain had well-conceived plans, at least concerning the organization of the active army. He possessed enlightenment; but the event would show that he had not the character without which enlightenment is nothing in an administrator. The reformation of the army being of value only as a whole, and necessarily attacking powerful and restless interests, these interests should not have been left time to look about them, but advantage should have been taken of the favor of public opinion to prescribe the

reform in a body. It was undertaken by piece-meal. Saint-Germain saw very clearly what should be done: but Maurepas, always opposed to bold resolutions, advised the King to promulgate the reformatory ordinances successively; and Saint-Germain neither knew how to insist authoritatively, nor to make the King understand wherein his position differed from that of Turgot, who had to effect changes which were as vast as complicated, and to which the element of time was indispensable. Saint-Germain wished at once to secure for himself a support, and to insure the duration of his reforms after him by the creation of a standing council of war, without the consent of which it should be thenceforth interdicted to change the military laws. The council of war remained a project: Maurepas did not design that the ministerial omnipotence should be limited.

Saint-Germain began his career by an amnesty to all deserters who should rejoin their colors, with the substitution of the galleys for the death-penalty for those who should desert in future, save in the case of desertion to the enemy (December 12, 1775). He then proceeded to the reformation of the privileged cavalry corps of the King's household, corps of officers performing the duties of soldiers, and receiving promotion simultaneously with the real officers; an institution opposed to all true military principles, but politically useful to the splendor and the strength of an absolute monarchy. It could thenceforth be seen how inferior Saint-Germain's energy was to his projects. He knew not how to resist the clamors of the great nobles who commanded these corps. He abolished the musketeers, who formed precisely the most brilliant arm of the service; but he retained the other companies in part, especially the body-guards, the most numerous and the most expensive, and even went so far as to grant the rank of officers to all the gendarmerie; thus creating a new abuse, while undertaking to overthrow the old ones (December, 1775-February, 1776). He disbanded the provincial regiments, an institution which he would have done better to improve; and left civilians free from all military service, and subject only to conscription for the army and the navy. He abolished the Military School and the Preparatory College of La Flèche, and caused the children of noblemen, educated at the King's expense in this college, to be thenceforth distributed through the ordinary colleges, from which, at the age of fifteen, they were to be sent to the regiments, among twelve hundred cadets of noble birth supported there by the King (February 1, 1776). Another regulation, of March 28,

1776, distributed the future cadets among half a score of colleges, under the superintendence of Benedictines, Oratorians, and Minims; an education which seemed a strange one for the training of warriors.¹ March 25, 1776, ordinances of unquestionable utility appeared concerning the number and salaries of the governors of towns and provinces; the formation of the troops into divisions, in such a manner as to have, instead of isolated regiments, a true army, organized in large corps, and trained to manœuvre in unison; the separation of financial matters from all military posts; an increase of pay, which the increased price of all provisions rendered just and necessary; an equitable and regular order of promotion; and, lastly, various measures designed to give the army that uniformity of organization which Choiseul had already so greatly advanced. All this was excellent; but, shortly after proclaiming the abolition of the vendibility of military rank, Saint-Germain permitted a hundred captains' commissions in the cavalry to be sold, in order to provide for sundry expenses of his ministry. It was not in this manner that Turgot led reform.

All the innovations of Saint-Germain were not, moreover, equally judicious. In his disciplinary regulations, a medley of excellent provisions and monastic minutiae, he took a fancy to introduce corporal punishment, which was in use among the Germans and the English, but which had never been known in the French army. The old Gallic honor revolted: rebellions and suicides ensued when it was in question to punish the soldiers by blows with the flat of the sword. "I love nothing of the sword but the blade!" exclaimed a grenadier; and the speech ran through France. A subaltern officer plunged the weapon into his heart with which he had been forced to strike a soldier. The officers approved of the susceptibility of their soldiers, and the discipline became laxer instead of more rigid.²

A speedy reaction was effected in public opinion against Saint-Germain; and the unevenness of his temper, a mixture of abruptness and weakness, made him as many enemies as the inconsis-

¹ A still more singular clause in the disciplinary regulation of March 25 is that in which the minister declares that it is the King's intention to permit "no officer among his troops who makes a display of infidelity." — *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. p. 472.

² *Vie du comte de Saint-Germain*, prefixed to his *Correspondance avec Paris Duvernei*, 2 vols. 8vo, London, 1789; *Mém. du comte de Saint-Germain*, 12mo, Amsterdam, 1779; *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. *passim*; Dros, *Hist. de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 184, *et seq.*

tency of his conduct. The confusion of his reforms with those of Turgot, by the unenlightened masses, was an additional obstacle to the latter.

Turgot pursued his course with a firmness which nothing could shake, and an activity which nothing could weary, and this amidst long and painful attacks of the gout, which had already made inroads upon his strong constitution. He hastened more in proportion as he could rely less upon time and life.

The first financial results of his administration were the best argument that he could give the King in behalf of his economic plans. In the report of the receipts and expenditures for 1776, the deficit was found reduced from thirty-six and a half to twenty-three and a half millions. There was really no deficit, since more than thirty-onemillions of arrears had been paid: a deficit, therefore, no longer existed in the ordinary expenditure, which, on the contrary, was exceeded by the receipts.

In the course of January, 1776, Turgot presented to the King in council a series of proposed laws, which made new and very great advances in his system. The principal ones were, first, the abolition of the *corvée* with respect to the roads, and the substitution of a tax on the landed proprietors; secondly, the abolition of the duties established at Paris on grain and flour, and of all that vexatious and disjointed police of grain which would have rendered all traffic in grain absolutely impossible at Paris and in the suburbs, had the regulations been executed to the letter,—this was the necessary complement of the edicts of 1763 and 1774 concerning the free transit of grain within the kingdom;¹ thirdly, the abolition of the offices created in the markets, quays, and ports of Paris;² fourthly, the suppression of wardenships, masterships, and trade corporations, and the full liberty of every citizen to undertake any kind of manufacture, in conformity with natural right.

Other projects transpired which were to follow these. First,

¹ The declaration of 1763 had left standing all the special regulations of the towns. We have just seen those of Rouen: those of Paris extended their action within a circuit of twenty leagues, intercepted the communication between the east and the west, and, combined with those of Rouen, absolutely deprived the basin of the Seine of free trade. At Lyons, the public granaries and the increase of the duties produced almost the same effect. A royal declaration authorized exportation free of duty within the jurisdiction of the parliament of Toulouse and of Roussillon.

² There were as many as thirty-two hundred loaders, unloaders, carriers, etc., of grain.—*Œuvres de Turgot*, t. I. p. 61. The courtier-commissioners of wines were retained.

the reformation of the civil household of the King, the monstrous expense of which was triple that of the military household,¹ and which Turgot designed to reduce fourteen millions by a gradual diminution, which would not be completed until the expiration of nine years; secondly, the transformation of the two twentieths, a tax vaguely assessed, and arbitrarily apportioned, into a *territorial subsidy*, established on a strictly proportional basis; thirdly, the thorough modification of the salt-tax, so odiously unequal; fourthly, the abolition or the conversion of the feudal rights of the royal domain into an annual tribute, as an example from the King to the seigniors, who were requested to consent to the redemption or conversion of their rights by reforming the provisions of the local law which opposed it; fifthly, the validation of Protestant marriages.²

All the official and privileged classes, from the holders of peerages and high posts in the King's household to the tradewardens, and holders of masterships, buzzed like a bee-hive, or rather a swarm of hornets disturbed in their nest. The *Flour War* had failed. Preparations were made for a desperate resistance on another ground. The opposition had already been manifested in the council itself. Maurepas had said nothing; but the keeper of the seals, Miromesnil, the tool of Maurepas, had not been ashamed to defend the *corvée*, that odious imitation of feudal abuses, by which the monarchy in the eighteenth century had consummated the ruin of the inhabitants of the rural districts subject to the villain-tax, and had opposed, in the name of the *necessary* privileges of the nobility, the levy of a tax on the landed proprietors for the making and repairing of the roads. Turgot answered Miromesnil with his usual warmth: "The keeper of the seals seems to have adopted the principle, that, by the constitution of the State, the nobility is to be exempt from all taxation. This idea will appear a paradox to the greater part of the nation. The *roturiers* are certainly the most numerous class, and the time has passed when their voices were not counted."³ The King decided in favor of Turgot, and signed the edicts.⁴

¹ The military household cost eight millions; the civil household of the King, more than twenty-three millions; the households of the Queen, the princes, and the princesses, more than thirteen millions!—See *Comptes rendus des finances*, 1758–1787, p. 169.

² Among the writings published for the purpose of paving the way, and shaping public opinion, may be remarked the *Reflexions sur la Jurisprudence criminelle*, by Condorcet (in opposition to the code of the salt-tax).—See *Mélanges économiques*, t. II.

³ *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. pp. 269, 270.

⁴ Louis XVI., seized with the spirit of emulation, wished also to labor in the cause

The opposition concentrated in the parliament, which became, as Turgot had clearly foreseen, the headquarters of all the stationary or retrogressive interests. The parliament took the offensive as early as January 30. A young counsellor, D'Épréménil, destined to a noisy renown, denounced to the company, in the presence of the princes and peers, an anonymous pamphlet against the *corvée*, and took the opportunity to inveigh in the most virulent terms against the sect of the economists, and Turgot, designated as clearly as if he had been named. The advocate-general, Séguier, assumed a lofty tone towards the denounced pamphlet; a *futile* writing, "more worthy of contempt than of censure." The parliament suppressed the writing, which was the work of none other than Voltaire. Three pamphlets in favor of the ministry had just issued, one after another, from the laboratory at Ferney.¹

February 9,² the edicts announced were sent to the parliament for registration. The *corvée* was abolished as *unjust*. Turgot hoped that such a stigma, stamped on this exaction by the King's own hand, would render its reëstablishment impossible. The tax which replaced it, and which was not to exceed ten millions, was levied on all the proprietors of landed property, or of incomes from real estate subject to the twentieths, which left the ecclesiastical tithes untouched. Turgot "did not wish to have two quarrels on his hands at once." The preamble of the edict concerning the trade-wardenships repelled from the throne, in the name of natural right, the extravagant pretension of making the natural and universal right to labor a crown right, which the subjects must purchase from the prince. All the circumspection demanded by prudence and justice was observed in the suppression of offices and the abolition of wardenships.

The abolition of wardenships was to be immediate only at Paris: in the provinces, it was not to be effected until after the government had taken cognizance of the debts of the communities,

of reform. He exhumed and rejuvenated a regulation of Colbert for the destruction of the rabbits which ravaged the fields adjoining the royal forests (January 21, 1776); thus showing, as the historian (M. Droz) remarks, the goodness of his intentions and the narrowness of his mind.

¹Bachaumont, t. IX. pp. 37-41; *Merc. hist.*, t. CLXXX. p. 324. One of the three pamphlets was entitled *Lettre d'un laboureur de Champagne à M. Necker*.

²On the same day, a decree of the council prescribed that the boxes of medicines distributed gratuitously through the country should be tripled. February 6, another decree had reduced the width of the highways from sixty to forty-two feet; thus giving considerable more space for agriculture.

and secured their redemption. At Paris itself, the execution of the edict was suspended with respect to certain vocations involving the public faith, the general police, or the security and life of the citizens,—the goldsmith's trade, printing, and pharmacy,—until special regulations had been given them.¹ Ward syndics replaced the officers of the communities with respect to measures of order and surveillance. All kinds of commerce and manufactures were made free to every one, even to foreigners not naturalized, in consideration of a declaration before the lieutenant-general of police. As to workmen employed by contractors, it belonged to the latter to represent to the lieutenant of police the status of the men in their employ. The regulations concerning unhealthy or dangerous trades were maintained, as well as some other provisions prescribed by public morality. The lieutenant-general of police was to judge summarily, upon the report of experts, disputes concerning defective manufacture, and between employers and workmen, under the amount of one hundred livres: in cases above this sum, they were to be brought before the ordinary courts. All the fraternities, a religious form of corporation, as the wardenships were the civil form, were abolished.

Of six edicts sent by the King, the parliament registered only one, decreeing the abolition of the fund of Poissi; a fiscal institution, which imposed useless burdens upon the butchers of Paris, under the pretext of securing them resources. The parliament appointed a commission, of which the Prince de Conti insisted on being a member, for the examination of the five others. February 17, the commission made a report; after which, remonstrances entreating the King to withdraw the edicts were resolved upon. February 23, the advocate-general, Séguier, who had uttered such high-sounding phrases against despotism in the times of Louis XV., delivered a furious harangue against a pamphlet entitled *The Objections to Feudal Rights*, composed, at Turgot's instigation, by the chief clerk of finance, Boncerf. This paper, written with moderation, sought to demonstrate to the seigniors that it was for their interest to accept the redemption of the feudal rights; and its greatest audacity consisted in affirming, that, if the seigniors refused the offers of the vassals, the King might decide the question authoritatively. The advocate-general proclaimed the feudal rights, the *corvées*, and the banalities, "an integral por-

¹ Since Turgot admitted the necessity of regulating certain vocations, it is difficult to understand why the baker's trade did not figure among these exceptions.

tion of property ;" and inveighed against *men, who, hidden under the veil of mystery*, "sowed ideas among the public, capable of subverting the property of all the citizens, and sought to shake the foundations of the State."¹

The parliament ratified by its vote this monstrous confusion between privileged and exceptional property, and property existing by common right. It condemned the pamphlet to be burned, and issued a writ against the person of the author. It thus proved recreant to the most honorable traditions of its past, — its former struggles against the feudal spirit. The Council of State, *per contra*, suppressed the opinions and remonstrances which the corporations of arts and trades had caused to be published by Linguet and other lawyers. The author of the pamphlet against *feudal rights* was summoned to Versailles, and placed under the immediate protection of the King. War was openly declared. The remonstrances of the parliament were presented March 4. We do not possess the original. It is affirmed that the parliament enunciated the principle therein, that the people in France were subject to the *corvée* and villain-tax at the pleasure of the seigniors (were *taillable et corvéable à volonté*), and that the King had no power to change this part of the constitution. It is probable that the original did not express itself with this rude abruptness. The King replied by a command to register the edicts, and a prohibition to prosecute the author of the pamphlet against feudal rights. The parliament renewed its remonstrances, and commissioned its first president (D'Aligre) "to obtain from the King the suppression of this inundation of economic writings," and to represent to him the danger of permitting the printing of "seditious writings, tending to stir up all nations to insurrection, the example of which had just been seen in Bohemia."

The Bohemian peasants, indeed, had just rebelled against the intolerable exactions of their lords, and Maria Theresa's government had been unable to reestablish order except by concessions to this justly exasperated people.²

The King repeated the command to register the edicts without delay; and, as certain of the ministers strove to excuse the resistance of the magistracy, "I see very clearly," he answered abruptly, "that no one here cares for the people but M. Turgot and I!"

¹ *Mercure hist.*, t. CLXXX. p. 324, *et seq.*

² The seigniors exacted five days of road-labor a week! The five days were reduced to three. — See *Mercure hist.*, t. CLXXIX.

